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Ibn Arabî and His Interpreters
Part II: Influences and Interpretations

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SUMMARY:

Part II of this article, to he concluded in *JAOS* 107.1, surveys some representative lines of interpretation and influence of Ibn ‘Arabî's work among subsequent Islamic mystics and thinkers (and their critics) as they are revealed in recent translations. Their comparison with Ibn ‘Arabî's own writings brings out (1) the intellectual and institutional conditions underlying the creative aspects of the Shaykh's work and accounting for its phenomenal spread; (2) important aspects of his writing and teaching often neglected by his later interpreters; and (3) the remarkable diversity, selectivity, and autonomous development of subsequent Sufi traditions as they transformed and adapted his works in light of their own concerns. This half deals with a famous treatise (by Balyânî) representing the "monistic" Sufism of Ibn Sab‘în (and its many critics); an interesting apocryphal work (actually by a later Qâdiri writer); the influential Persian works of Nasafî; and the decisive role of the metaphysically oriented teachings of Ibn ‘Arabî's disciple and son-in-law S. Qûnawî and his successors.

INTRODUCTION

Paraphrasing Whitehead's famous remark about Plato—and with something of the same degree of exaggeration—one could say that the history of Islamic thought subsequent to Ibn ‘Arabî (at least down to the 18th century and the radically new encounter with the modern West) might largely be construed as a series of footnotes to his work. To the degree that such a statement is justifiable, this wide-ranging influence must be explained not simply by reference to the intrinsic characteristics of Ibn ‘Arabî's own life and works discussed in Part I of this article (such features as the sheer volume of his writing, the diversity of intellectual disciplines he draws on, his consistent focus on the Qur’an and *hadîth* as his fundamental sources and primary mode of presentation, or the remarkable scope of his personal teaching and contacts, from Andalusia to Anatolia), but also by their coincidence

with a broader historical movement of institutionalization of Sufism (with a concomitant penetration of "Sufi" forms and allusions in virtually every domain of the arts and intellectual life) that seems to have touched the most scattered regions of the Islamic world at almost the same time, and with a broad range of inescapable intellectual and practical problems posed by that institutionalization.[1] Because of the vast extent of that larger movement and the degree to which Ibn ‘Arabî's own works are grounded in broader traditions (of common texts, vocabulary, methods, etc.) he shared with other prominent Sufi figures of this period, it is often very difficult to gauge the depth and directness of his influence once one goes beyond the most prominent tradition constituted by his commentators and the line of his disciples and their direct students.

Despite these complicating factors, however, it is clear that an adequate account of Ibn ‘Arabî's interpreters, in addition to (1) the direct line of his commentators and students, would have to take into consideration at least the following broader dimensions of his influence; (2) the profound penetration of his technical vocabulary and concepts (more or less adequately understood) in subsequent Islamic poetry (first in Persian, then in languages such as Turkish or Urdu influenced by Persian poetic forms), as well as in the explanation or interpretation of earlier Sufi poets such as Rûmî or Ibn al-Fârid;[2] (3) a similar spreading of

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[1]Historical observers have often noted the remarkable—some would say "providential"—coincidence of many of the greatest Sufi saints (Abû Madyan, Ibn al-‘Arîf, etc.), poets (Rûmî, ‘Attâr, Ibn al-Fârid), and founders of most of the classical orders within the period of a century or so surrounding the dates of Ibn ‘Arabî's life. (See, e.g., A. Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, p. 279, who also notes the coincidence of similar mystical movements at the same period in non-Islamic parts of Europe and Asia.) One of the most striking examples of this is the circle of Sufi acquaintances of Ibn ‘Arabî's disciple Sadr al-Din al-Qûnawî discussed later in this article. Historical research into the nature and significance of the wider process of institutionalization, in particular, is still in its infancy and largely determined by limited scholarly perspectives (architectural. political, social, geographical, etc.) that make generalizations concerning the broader phenomena very difficult.

[2] (The commentaries on Ibn al-Fârid’s famous *Nazm al-Sulûk* by such key figures in Ibn ‘Arabî's school as Sa’îd al-Farghânî and 'Abd al-Razzâq al-Kâshânî are discussed below, nn. 63 and 73.) The widest popular survey of the influences of Ibn ‘Arabî's terminology and popularized (and often quite fallacious) versions of his thought in the poetry of many Islamic languages is in A. Schimmel, op. cit. (index under "Ibn ‘Arabî'," *"Wahdat al-wujûd,"* etc.), which is especially helpful for the Turkish and "Indo-Pakistani" regions, complementing the largely Iranian focus of much of the research summarized in this article. Professor Schimmel frequently stresses (e.g., p. 210) that the poetic integration of Ibn ‘Arabî's terminology often reflected little or no understanding of his teachings, and readers should be cautioned that the pages devoted in her survey to the Shaykh himself (pp. 263-74, on "theosophical Sufism")

his metaphysical concepts and problems—again with widely varying degrees of comprehension and agreement or disagreement-into subsequent schools of philosophy (especially those descending from Avicenna), kalam theology, and even Twelver Shiite thought;[3] and (4) the more practical and devotional use of the full range of his writings (not so exclusively the metaphysical or doctrinal ones), as part of the larger corpus of Sufi literature, by ordinary Sufis of all ranks, especially in those regions where Ibn ‘Arabî's own Arabic works were more popularly accessible.[4] Finally, as a sort of secondary reflection of

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actually are best understood as a reflection of some of those later classical stereotypes and misunderstandings ("pantheism," "monism," "gnosis," etc.). As we have attempted to point out both in Part I and in several sections below, those recurrent misrepresentations are not simply a "vulgarization" or popular "simplification" of Ibn ‘Arabî's ideas, but rather the symptoms of certain ongoing, historically influential tendencies in Sufism (corresponding to certain perennial possibilities in the philosophic understanding and formulation of mystical experience) considerably pre-dating the Shaykh. In fact, the more theoretical aspect of his writing (and the efforts of his later disciples) can best be understood as an attempt to overcome the interrelated practical, philosophic, and theological implications of precisely those popular and recurrent misunderstandings!

[3] A number of particular aspects of this tendency are discussed in the fourth section (Qûnawî, Kâshânî, Âmulî, etc.) and accompanying notes below. The only broad introduction to this movement, at least in Western languages, is to be found in Part II of H. Corbin's *Histoire de la philosophie islamique* ("La philosophic islamique depuis la mort d'Averroës jusqu'à nos jours," pp.1067-1188 in the volume *Histoire de Ia Philosophie-III* in the *Encyclopédie de la Pléiade;* see especially pp. 1097-1134 on "La metaphysique du Soufisme" and pp.1149-52 on "l'Intégration d'Ibn ‘Arabî à la Métaphysique Shi'ite"), and in its continuation, in somewhat greater detail, in the volume entitled *La philosophic iranienne islamique aux XVII^e^ et XVII^e^ siècles* (Paris, Buchet/Chastel, 1981), a collection of the French introductions to the first three volumes of the Persian and Arabic texts edited by J. Ashtiyânî in the *Anthologie des philosophes iraniens depuis le XVIIe siècle jusqu'à nos jours* (Tehran, 1971, 1975, and 1978). In addition to the inherent limits of these studies—in the case of the encyclopedia article [now reprinted, with updated bibliography, in a single volume with Part I, *Histoire de la philosophic islamique* (Paris, Gallimard, 1986)], the extreme concision of both the text (largely limited to the citation of key figures and their major works) and bibliography; in the case of the *Anthologie,* the necessarily personal selection of themes discussed in the French summaries—readers should also keep in mind that these discussions are primarily limited to the themes and individuals that were subsequently taken as important in later *Iranian* (and primarily Twelver *Shiite)* thought. Similarly extensive developments in the Ottoman realms and Muslim India and Central Asia, for a variety of reasons, have not yet received the same kind of sustained scholarly attention as the traditions that survived in Iran.

[4] This is the realm in which the question of Ibn ‘Arabî's more profound spiritual influences—most closely corresponding to his own aims and intentions, as expressed in his claim to be the "seal of Muhammadan sainthood" *(walâya),* and to his perception by later Sufis as the "greatest master"—is certainly most pertinent, since his ultimate aim was clearly not the promulgation of a personal doctrine or teaching, but rather an individual transformation and realization whose inner degree and outward manifestations necessarily

all these diverse strands of influence, there is the ongoing (and still virtually unexplored) chain of critiques and attacks on Ibn ‘Arabî—or more precisely, on social movements, phenomena, and formulaic "theses" vaguely associated with his name—that has likewise continued throughout the Islamic world down to our own day, illustrated by such symbolically important (and otherwise disparate) figures as Ibn Taymiyya, Ibn Khaldûn, or Ahmad Sirhindî.[5]

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differ with each individual. It is also where the limitations of historical and literary evidence are most evident. As a small but typical illustration, one can imagine the difficulties involved in tracing Ibn ‘Arabî's widespread "influences," even in non-Muslim (and non-scholarly) circles, in the modern West. As one can see in a noteworthy case like ‘Abd al-Qâdir al-Jazâ’irî (at the end of this article), that sort of transmission is often connected with Ibn ‘Arabî's profound historical role in a wide number of Sufi orders (again, see Schimmel, op. cit., for interesting cases in India and even Malaysia).

Invaluable evidence concerning Ibn ‘Arabî's own oral teaching and practical activity as a spiritual master is provided in the important text by one of his closest and oldest disciples, translated and edited by Denis Gril, "Le *Kitâb al-inbâh 'alâ tarîq Allâh de* ‘Abdallâh Badr al-Habashî: un temoignage de l'enseignement spirituel de Muhyî l-dîn Ibn ‘Arabî" pp. 97-164 in *Annales Islamologiques,* tome XV (1979). (A complete review of Prof Gril's study, which came to our attention too late to be included in this article, should appear in a future issue of the *Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabî Society.*)

Another typical illustration of the Shaykh's wider, and less purely "theoretical," influence among Sufis in (at least) the Arab world can be found in the studies of the later Moroccan Sufi Ibn ‘Ajîba (1747-1809) by J.-L. Michon: *Le Soufi Marocain Ahmad Ibn 'Ajîba et son Mi'râj: glossaire de la mystique musulmane* (Paris, Vrin, 1973), and *L'Autobiographie (Fahrasa) du Soufi Marocain Ahmad Ibn 'Ajîba* (2nd edition: Milan, l’Arche, 1982). In addition to bringing out the influence of Ibn ‘Arabî's prayers *(awrâd)* and poems in this context, such studies are extremely important—if not indeed indispensable—in giving a more concrete sense of the sort of practical and historical settings in which the transmission of these "influences" and teachings took place. We have tried to suggest something of the decisive importance and diversity of those contexts—which specialists often take for granted, but which are seldom self-evident to readers limited to translations and the purely literary dimension—in the discussions that follow.

[5] For some of the literary sources of this long line of critiques and defenses—in almost all cases, symptomatic of the lack of any serious interest in Ibn ‘Arabî's own writings or teaching, limited to a few "classic" passages from the *Fusûs al-Hikam*—see the references by Osman Yahia in his *Histoire et classification…,* vol. I, pp. 114-35, which are considerably expanded in the Arabic introduction to his edition (with H. Corbin), discussed below at n. 88, of the introduction to Haydar Âmulî's commentary on the *Fusûs al-Hikam (K. Nass al-Nusûs /"La Texte des Textes,"* Tehran/ Paris, 1975), pp. 36-65 of the Arabic introduction. This can be supplemented, for certain regions, by related references and discussions in E. L. Ormsby, *Theodicy in Islamic Thought* (Princeton, 1984), especially for the sources of one aspect of this controversy in the Maghreb and Egypt (pp. 92-131, otherwise unreliable in depiction of Ghazâlî, Ibn ‘Arabî, and later Sufism and Islamic philosophy in general); for the Yemen, see allusions by Ahmed Ateº in his article on Ibn ‘Arabî in the *EI*^{2}, vol. III, pp. 710-11.

In light of the scope of each of these perspectives and the multitude of still largely unexplored problems and areas of research they suggest,[6] the translations discussed in this article can only serve to highlight our relative ignorance—historically speaking, at least—of this vast period of Islamic intellectual life and the riches it contains.[7] The works dealt with in

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As with the most recent modern continuation of this controversy—i.e., the public debate over the attempted suppression of O. Yahia's new critical edition of the *Futûhât* in Egypt in the late 1970s—most stages of this dispute are fascinating and revealing signs of underlying political and social tensions and conflicts in which, with rare exceptions the brief references to Ibn ‘Arabî (whether pro or con) serve almost exclusively an ideological (and not intellectual or philosophic) function. Unfortunately, most secondary accounts, even by modern Western scholars, have been content to repeat the outward "theological" remains of these disputes rather than to investigate their actual contemporary implications in each case. (Two notable exceptions, carefully distinguishing the intellectual and socio-political elements of such controversies in their contemporary settings, are the study of Simnânî by H. Landolt discussed below [n. 80], and Y. Friedman's *Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindî...*, Montreal, 1971; the case of Sirhindî is discussed more generally in the historical surveys of both Dr Schimmel, *op. cit*., pp. 367ff., and M. Molé, *Las mystiques musulmans*, Paris, 1965, pp. 108-10.) Hopefully the many contemporary instances of persecution of Sufis or similar groups (e.g., most recently in Sudan and Iran) will encourage further healthy discrimination, in historical studies, between the intellectual and spiritual seriousness of such controversies (most often negligible, at best) and their specific ideological functions and significance in each particular case: see, in this regard, the illuminating remarks concerning three earlier classic "Sufi trials" (of Nûrî, Hallâj, and ‘Ayn al-Qudât) in C. Ernst, *Words of Ecstacy in Sufism* (Albany, 1955), pp.97-132.

[6] The limitations (for the most part implicit) of the translations and studies discussed below are in fact representative of two broader problems with most available work on other traditions of Islamic thought in general during this later period: (l) Scholarship (Islamic at least as much as Western) continues to focus mainly on Arabic (and Persian and Turkish sources from the "central" Islamic regions, and thus frequently reflects categories and judgments (e.g., of "decadence," "marginality," "dependency," etc.) which may or may not be applicable to developments in regions like Malaysia, Indonesia, Central Asia and China, non-Arab Africa, etc. (2) The limitations and distortions of the classical theological *cum* philological treatment of Islamic disciplines become quite apparent where, in contrast with earlier periods, we have sufficient historical evidence to perceive more clearly both the intellectual and the socio-cultural complexities of later developments. Integrating those two approaches, however, requires a breadth of training and insight that are likely to remain quite rare in these fields.

[7] "Relative" ignorance because that ignorance (and corresponding "knowing") which concern our authors here clearly transcend any particular historical situation and even the traditions which serve (potentially, at least) to transmit and awaken that awareness. On the purely historical plane, what is remarkable is how much our current ignorance reflects not a lack of textual sources, but rather a sort of willful negligence or collective "amnesia"—extremely recent, historically speaking—flowing from the transformation of educational methods and social structures, and from movements of "reform" and "return to the sources" frequently involving the radical rejection of an immense cultural heritage of which these

this Part are introduced roughly in chronological order (according to the dates of their original author), but each section focuses on a different aspect of the Shaykh's broader heritage that is exemplified by the translation in question. This procedure should provide a framework within which non-specialists can also better appreciate the historical context and importance of these (and other forthcoming) contributions in this area. Of course this also means that the same weight cannot be given, in the limited space of this article, to other perspectives and aspects of these works that—depending on each reader's interests—are certainly equally deserving of further attention in each case. Fortunately, quite apart from their historical interest which is our main focus here, many of these books are themselves classics in one field or another of Sufi literature, chosen by their translators for their evident intellectual or spiritual value. Even in translation, those intrinsic qualities should be readily accessible to readers approaching them in that spirit.

I. Michel Chodkiewicz's translation of Awhad al-Din Balyânî's *K. al-Wahda al-Mutlaqa* [*Épître sur I'Unicité Absolue*. Pp.85. Paris: Les Deux Oceans. 1982.] is far more than a new (and greatly improved) version of a classic, frequently translated Sufi text often mistakenly attributed to Ibn ‘Arabî.[8] Thanks to the author's extremely condensed notes and

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traditions are one integral part. The writings of ‘Abd al-Qâdir (d. 1300/1813) discussed below—and their contrast with his perception by modern nationalists—are one particularly striking illustration of the very recent and radical nature of this transformation.

[8] The same book was originally translated at the turn of the century by T. H. Weir *(The Treatise on Unity,* in the *JRAS,* October, 1901; reprinted as *Whoso Knoweth Himself,* London, Beshara Publications, 1976), who attributed it directly to Ibn ‘Arabî. An Italian version was published in 1907 by "Abdul-Hâdî" [Ivan-Gustav Agueli; see M. Chodkiewicz's references, p. 17, n. 4 of the introduction], followed by a French version (in *La Gnose,* 1911) most recently reprinted as *Le traité de l'unité*, "dit d'Ibn ‘Arabî" (Paris, Sindbad/Editions de l'Échelle, 1977), along with another translation and article by Abdul-Hâdî. Abdul-Hâdî's original introduction (pp. 19-21 of the 1977 edition) clearly raises the question of attribution and the likely authorship of "Balabânî" or "Balayânî," while the most recent editor (G. Leconte, p.10) follows M. Vâlsan in definitely attributing it to "al-Balabânî."

Osman Yahia ("Répertoire Général," Numbers 12, 181, 458) also recognizes both the apocryphal nature of the attribution and the multiplicity of titles, which apparently explains the eventual attribution to Ibn ‘Arabî: one of those titles, the *R. fî al-Ahadîya* is very close to an authentic work of Ibn ‘Arabî—on a very different subject—entitled *K. al-Alif,* or *K. al-Ahadîya*. (That genuine work of the Shaykh has recently been translated by Abraham Abadi: *The Book of Alif (Or) The Book of Unity,* along with brief commentaries from the *Fusûs al-Hikam,* in the *Journal of the Muhyiddin Ibn ‘Arabî Society,* II [1984], pp. 15-40.)

M. Chodkiewicz's translation is based on a new, scientific edition (see p.40), drawing

introduction—clearly the fruit of years of research and reflection not only on Ibn ‘Arabî but also on the many other currents (and critiques) of later Islamic mysticism—this study actually constitutes an extraordinarily rich introduction to the new and distinctive dimensions of Ibn ‘Arabî's thought, the underlying motivations (both historical and philosophic) for those contributions in the context of the development of Sufism, and the essential reasons for their remarkable historical success when compared with other efforts in the same direction. Mr. Chodkiewicz brings out these crucial points through his succinct allusions to four interrelated historical and doctrinal developments: (1) the identification of the real author of the work, a Persian Sufi master of Shiraz (d. 686/1288),[9] and other sources concerning his teaching; (2) the relations of Balyânî with the influential "monistic" Sufi teachings characteristic of Ibn Sab‘în (d. 669/1270) and his followers, and the fundamental differences separating them from the views of Ibn ‘Arabî; (3) the partial awareness of these differences and of their deeper philosophic significance revealed in the famous critiques of later Sufism by Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Khaldûn; and (4) allusions to the significance of this misattribution, as spread by the earlier translations, for the prevalent image of Ibn ‘Arabî in the West, both popularly and in much scholarly writing. In each case, the historical references, which at first glance might appear to be merely scholarly details, actually serve to bring out certain fundamental (and still far too often neglected) aspects of Ibn ‘Arabî's work and thought.

To begin with, this new translation, far more than its predecessors, has successfully caught the extraordinary, almost lyrical rhetorical power of Balyânî’s brief work (pp. 45-79, including the extensive notes), that rigorous simplicity and "force incantatoire" (p. 38) which no doubt help explain its favor with the earlier translators and succeeding generations of students. Introduced as a sort of commentary on the famous *hadîth* "He who knows his self,

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on a number of manuscripts mainly attributed to al-Balyânî (Osman Yahia lists only those Mss apocryphally attributed to Ibn ‘Arabî), which is to be published with a collection of related Arabic texts on the question of *wahdat al-wujûd*. He notes that the same text exists under at least seven titles (p. 19, n. 8), and that his choice in this case *(R. al-Wahdat al-Mutlaqa)* "rests on purely doctrinal considerations" (i.e., close affinities with the school of Ibn Sab‘în). which are carefully explained in the rest of the commentary.

[9] M. Chodkiewicz also clears up the longstanding confusion—e.g.. in Brockelmann—of this individual with several later writers with the same last name, and explains at least some of the variations in spelling, which may have been already current by the time of Ibn Taymiyya. The most important new biographical information, which is in perfect accordance with the content of this book (see the anecdote at n. 11 below), is drawn from Jâmî’s *Nafahât al al-Uns,* pp. 258-62 in the edition of M. Tawhîdîpûr (Tehran, 1336/1957); according to this account, Balyânî was a shaykh of the Suhrawardîya order.

knows his Lord,"[10] it is far less a theological or philosophic analysis than an extended *shath*—an "ecstatic utterance" expressing directly and without qualification an immediate personal realization of the ultimate Unity of God and the soul, and the "illusory" nature of all else when seen from that enlightened perspective. One cannot help but be reminded at every point—and it is here that the identification of the author as an influential Sufi shaykh of Shiraz, descended from a line going back to al-Qushayrî (d. 465/1074), takes on its full importance—of the echo of so many famous Persian verses, reflected in a wide variety of images, on the same ecstatic theme of *hameh ûst*" ("All is He!"). For the individual building blocks of this almost lyrical work—Balyânî's particular choice of Qur'anic verses, *hadîth* (especially the recurrent *hadîth al-nawâfil*), and *shatahât* (from al-Hallâj and al-Bastâmî)—were the same familiar materials through which generations of earlier and later Sufi writers in that part of the Islamic world continued to express their spiritual insights in Persian poetry or Arabic prose. Clearly, then, what sets this work apart is not the originality (or exactitude) of its thought, but the artistry, simplicity and above all the passion with which it repeats that overpowering vision.

Indeed to a great extent it was precisely the growing pervasiveness and familiarity of these mystical symbols and forms of expression, even outside their original Sufi setting, and the concomitant risks of serious misunderstandings—at once practical, philosophic, and

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[10] The translator has an excellent discussion (pp. 27-31) explaining the significance of the form of this *hadîth* adopted by Balyânî (i.e., beginning the concluding phrase with *fa-qad,* implying that one ***already*** knows/knew one's Lord), and underlining the very different interpretation sometimes given to this *hadîth* by Ibn 'Arabî, in view of the particular, highly "individualized" meanings of the notion of "lord" *(rabb)* in his thought.

More generally, Balyânî's use of *hadîth*, based on a limited selection of classic themes already dictated by a long preceding Sufi tradition, is in striking contrast with Ibn 'Arabî's procedure. The difference does not concern questions of "authenticity" where, as M. Chodkiewicz notes, both authors adhere to criteria other than those of the strictly historicist *muhaddithûn*—but rather the far greater *range* of materials and (at least relative) *independence* and originality of Ibn 'Arabî's interpretations, which often (like his treatment of the Qur'an) reflect a genuine inspiration and personal effort of meditation, instead of the repetition of accepted themes. (See also our discussion of his collection of *hadîth qudsi,* the *Mishkat al-Anwar,* in Part I of this essay.)

This is also one of the more obvious distinctions between Ibn 'Arabî and later writers of his "school," who seldom depart from his interpretations (especially in the *Fusûs*). That is, their familiarity with those interpretations, whether of Qur'an or *hadîth,* and their readiness to provide a coherent metaphysical explanation, eventually tend to obscure the (sometimes no doubt intentionally) shocking freshness and originality of Ibn 'Arabî's own formulations. (This is another advantage to discovering Ibn 'Arabî through reading the *Futûhât,* where no such "insulating" body of traditional interpretation exists.)

theological—that they pose when taken literally or simplistically, without regard to their appropriate context,[11] that help account for Ibn ‘Arabî's most distinctive personal contribution and the aspect of his work that had the greatest visible impact on subsequent Islamic thought: that is, his persistent focus on a comprehensive and elaborately balanced systematic framework (both theological and philosophic) for those following the spiritual Path—a framework which in the Shaykh's own writings, at least, is always at once metaphysical and highly practical. Balyânî’s work, with its repeated literal insistence on the world and self alike as nothing but "illusion," was the perfect exemplification of those recurrent moral dangers and genuine illusions—antinomianism, quietism, and messianism—and those ostensibly "heretical" theological formulations which had to be overcome and resolved, on both the theological and the deeper philosophic or spiritual levels, if Sufism was to answer the more serious underlying objections of such critics as Ibn Taymiyya or Ibn Khaldûn.[12]

The "originality"—if not the comprehensiveness and relative effectiveness—of Ibn ‘Arabî's response in this regard is often exaggerated in secondary accounts of his work. Almost all of Abû Hâmid al-Ghazâlî's (d. 1111) later writing, for example, is directed towards countering the same theoretical and practical dangers and illusions that are so vividly illustrated throughout Balyânî’s treatise; indeed the *hadîth* and *shatahât* which Ghazali repeatedly discusses, and the misunderstandings he seeks to avoid, are precisely those chosen

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[11] These risks of a sort of "misplaced literalism" with regard to Balyânî’s language (and its equivalents throughout Sufi literature) are poignantly stated in Jâmî’s story (p. 22 in the introduction to this translation) of a disciple of the Shîrâzî shaykh who let himself be bitten by a poisonous snake because. as he reproaches his master, "You yourself said that there is only God!" M. Chodkiewicz cites (pp. 22ff.) other statements by Balyânî transmitted by Jâmî (e.g., "Be God!" *[khudâ bâshîd])* which, while comprehensible in the broader doctrinal context of this work, would likewise readily lend themselves to rather obvious misunderstandings. Whether or not such stories are apocryphal is of relatively little importance compared to their exemplary significance in this context.

[12] The translator discusses at some length the frequent condemnations of Balyânî (and of the "monist" interpretations of Sufism more generally) by Ibn Taymiyya. It is important to recognize that the underlying concerns of these and other related Islamic critiques are not limited to the particular (and to us often seemingly arbitrary) theological terms in which they were often formulated. We have mentioned antinomianism, quietism, etc., because these are real, historically visible consequences (and ever-present inner temptations) whenever the intellect fails to grasp the intended meaning of cognate spiritual teachings, in any civilisational setting. Long before Ibn ‘Arabî or Ibn Sab‘în and the purportedly "monist" and "theoretical" Sufism that is the ostensible target of such critics as Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Khaldûn, one can find essentially the same criticisms and concerns constantly repeated, for example, in the works of al-Ghazâlî (see below and n. 13).

and emphasized (one might almost say "flaunted") by this later shaykh of Shiraz.[13]

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[13] Many of the relevant passages by al-Ghazâlî from this perspective, are collected in the series of translations by Father R. McCarthy to be found in his *Freedom and Fulfillment…* (Boston, Twayne Publishers, 1980), which also contains a useful annotated bibliography. Readers should be warned that at least 90% of the vast secondary literature on Ghazâlî, including many translations, betrays no awareness of the unifying spiritual (both philosophic and Sufi) perspectives and multifaceted rhetorical methods and intentions that tie together his outwardly disparate writings. There is still no single study showing how Ghazâlî creatively transformed the meaning of elements from other earlier intellectual traditions—Ash'arite *kalam,* Avicennan *falsafa,* Sufi authors and Shiite writings—in light of this central intention. Nor is there a single readily available source showing where his reworkings of those traditions may be guided by an internal, "descriptive" mirroring of metaphysical realities and their reflection in spiritual experience, and where—as is far more commonly the case—their particular form is dictated by an apologetic, defensive response to (or intellectual clarification of) the sort of theological/philosophical critiques and polemics evoked here.

In any event, Ghazâlî is certainly the most important known "precursor" of the explicitly metaphysical aspect of Ibn ‘Arabî's writings—the often cited "school of Ibn Masarra" being, so far as we know, a curious fiction inadvertently created by Asin Palacios. See the explanation of the textual misunderstandings on which that myth was built, in S. M. Stern's "Ibn Masarra, Follower of Pseudo-Empedocles, an Illusion," pp.325-37 in *Actas do IV Congresso de estudios arabes e islamicos* (Leiden, 1971) [now reprinted in S. M. Stern's *Medieval Arabic and Hebrew Thought,* ed. F. W. Zimmerman, London, 1983, article V]. Stern's remarks are confirmed by the recent discovery of authentic works by Ibn Masarra, which have no "pseudo-Empedoclean" elements, but are typical of the early Sufism of Sahl al-Tustarî.

Probably the best introduction to this side of Ghazâlî's thought (given the unfortunate inadequacy of most of the explanatory material for many of the existing translations from his *Ihyâ 'Ulûm al-Dîn*) is his *Mishkât al-Anwâr*, which should be approached in the excellent recent French translation by Roger Deladrière, *Le Tabernacle des Lumières* (Paris, Editions du Seuil, 1981). (The frequently reprinted English “version” by W. H. T. Gairdner completely changes the order and divisions of Ghazâlî's text, entirely misrepresenting it as merely a sample of Sufi "exegesis" and giving no idea of the strict technical terminology and conceptual structure underlying Ghazâlî's exposition.)

The comparison of Ghazâlî and Ibn ‘Arabî also brings out the third, and most problematic, dialectical "ingredient" in their thought, namely, their debts to Shiite (or related Neoplatonic) authors, beyond the more apparent role of the Ikhwân al-Safâ’—their common interest in not drawing attention to such readings being readily understandable. If Ibn Khaldun's accusations (in his *muqaddima)* that everything distinctive of the later, more "theoretical" schools of Sufism was "borrowed" from the Shiite "extremists" are as much polemical mudslinging as they are a concrete historical judgment, they do at least rest on a number of striking *formal* resemblances, e.g., in cosmology, astral cycles, spiritual hierarchies, eschatology, and the use of "negative theology." But quite apart from the more obvious adaptations of such themes in a writer like Ibn ‘Arabî, there is considerable doubt whether the Neoplatonic ontology and negative theology one finds in those earlier Shiite sources actually represents the same kind of mystical, "spiritually descriptive" (and only secondarily "theoretical") function that it takes on in Ibn ‘Arabî (and already in Ghazâlî's *Mishkat*).

Moreover, Ghazâlî's favorite dialectical "tools" and vocabulary in that effort were drawn from the same Ash'arite kalam and Avicennan philosophy that are key elements of Ibn ‘Arabî's own systematic thought, while similar efforts, using a different metaphysical vocabulary, were made by such lesser-known earlier figures as ‘Ayn al-Qudât Hamadânî and Suhrawardî.[14] Perhaps the most influential such systematic elaboration of the metaphysical dimensions of Sufism. after the writings of Ibn ‘Arabî, was developed in the works of his

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[14] The relative lack of influence of both of their efforts in Islamic circles probably has less to do with the martyrdoms of both thinkers as relatively young men, and more to do with their relative outspokenness and unwillingness to emphasize too exclusively the inner concordance between their spiritual insights and the more popular and legalistic understandings of the Islamic revelation—features which, as we have emphasized in Part I, are developed with scrupulous care and attention throughout Ibn ‘Arabî's writings, and most extensively in the *Futûhât*. (See additional discussions of this essential dimension of his work in several places below.)

For this Suhrawardî (traditionally referred to as *"Maqtûl,"* to distinguish him from his influential Sufi homonyms in Baghdad, including the founders of the Suhrawardîya order, initiator of *the futuwwa* movement, etc.), see the many studies by Henry Corbin, and especially his translation of fifteen shorter mystical and philosophic works, *L'Archange empourpré* (Paris: Fayard, 1976). This should soon be supplemented by the publication (Paris, Verdier, 1987) of Corbin's translation of the complete metaphysical part of Suhrawardî's *magnum opus*, the *Hikmat al-Ishrâq*, along with large parts of the commentaries by Shahrâzûrî, Qutb al-Dîn al-Shîrâzî, and Mullâ Sadrâ Shîrâzî: together, these texts already constitute something like a history of this still largely unknown tradition of Islamic philosophy over a period of several centuries. (In English, readers are still largely limited to the excellent brief introduction to Suhrâwardî’s life and work in S. H. Nasr's *Three Muslim Sages* [Cambridge, Mass., 1963].)

For ‘Ayn al-Qudât al-Hamadânî, non-specialists interested in his mystical/philosophical thinking—which seems to have been most appreciated among later Indian Sufis (see the translations and commentaries on his *Tamhîdât* cited by A. Schimmel, *op. cit.*, Index under "‘Ayn al-Qudât")—still have in English only a few relatively short studies by T. Izutsu, despite the availability of excellent critical editions of his major works by A. ‘Usayrân (and A. Munzavî). Izutsu's studies include "Creation and the Timeless Order of Things: A Study in the Mystical Philosophy of ‘Ayn al-Qudât," pp. 124-40 in *The Philosophical Forum* IV, no. I (Fall 1972); "The Concept of Perpetual Creation in Islamic Mysticism and in Zen Buddhism," in *Mélanges offerts à Henry Corbin* (Tehran, 1969); and "Mysticism and the Linguistic Problem of Equivocation in the Thought of 'Ayn al-Qudât Hamadânî," pp. 153-57 in *Studia Islamica* XXI (1970). The first two articles, which bring out this Persian mystic’s considerable affinities with the later thought of Ibn ‘Arabî, are now more readily accessible in a French translation (along with two of Prof. Izutsu's other, more general studies of Islamic mystical thought) by M.-C. Grandry, *Unicité de l'Existence et Création Perpetuelle en Mystique Islamique* (Paris, Les Deux Océans, 1980). A. J. Arberry's translation of the *Shakwa al-Gharîb*, an "apology" written shortly before his martyrdom, is a fascinating autobiographical document and introduction to ‘Ayn al-Qudât's lyrical Sufism, but does not give much idea of his more philosophic and technical writing: *A Sufi Martyr: The Apologia of ‘Ain al-Qudât al-Hamadhânî* (London, 1969).

fellow Andalusian Sufi and near contemporary, Ibn Sab'în, whose distinctively "monistic" forms of expression may also have had an indirect influence on Balyânî's writing.[15] Mr. Chodkiewicz 's comparative notes (based on extensive references to relevant passages of the *Futûhât*)—through their detailed contrast of Balyânî's (and Ibn Sab'în's) rhetorically simplified, often intentionally paradoxical metaphysical formulations with Ibn 'Arabî's far more sophisticated "non-dualistic" metaphysics of *tajalliyât*—clearly bring out the very different (if not ultimately opposed) practical and theoretical implications of the two perspectives.[16] Yet at the same time, precisely this contrast between these two widespread

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[15] M. Chodkiewicz—following Massignon—indicates (pp.23-25) that this influence could have passed through Ibn Sab'în's disciple, the influential Arabic mystical poet (and effective founder of the Sab'înîya *tarîqa* in Egypt) al-Shushtarî (d. 668/1269), with whom Balyânî may have studied during a pilgrimage to Mecca. Whatever their historical relations—and many expressions reminiscent of Ibn Sab'în's ecstatic "monism" of Being can be found, apparently independently, in both earlier and later Persian mystical poetry—the distinction between that 'monistic' outlook and Ibn 'Arabî's far more subtle metaphysics and theology, which the translator underlines at many points in this text, are certainly instructive. (He promises, at p.39, a mare detailed study of these contrasts in a future book on Ibn 'Arabî's thought.)

Despite the completion of accessible editions of Ibn Sab'în's major works, there is still a remarkable lack of any extensive published Western studies of his thought. (The available sources, largely in Arabic or unpublished theses, are cited at pp. 34-35 here.) Readers should he cautioned that the more openly mystical, Sufi side of his thought emphasized here (which may itself, as the translator hypothesizes, have been influenced by Ibn 'Arabî's writings) seems to have been integrated with other substantial elements (psychology, epistemology, etc.) explicitly drawn from various earlier schools of Islamic philosophy (i.e., *falsafa)*: see, for example, the text of his *al-Masâ'il al-Siqilliyya, "Correspondance philosophique avec l'empereur Frédéric II de Hohenstaufen,"* ed. S. Yaltkaya (and with French introduction by H. Corbin), Paris/Beirut, 1941, which gives some idea of his extensive philosophical training, strongly recalling Suhrawardî. For a brief but revealing overview, which also brings out the still unexplored differences between Ibn Sab'în and Shushtarî, see the selected texts from both authors in L. Massignon's *Recueil de textes inédits concernant l'histoire de la mystique en pays d'Islam* (Paris, 1929), pp. 123-40, and most notably the strange *isnâd* of the *tarîqa sab'îniyya* (cited pp. 139-40), mixing Plato and Aristotle, famous Sufis (*including* Ibn 'Arabî and Ibn al-Fârid), and such Islamic philosophers as Ibn Sina, Ibn Tufayl, and Ibn Rushd!

[16] M. Chodkiewicz generally seems to imply—no doubt rightly, and following a perspective that is already evident in both al-Ghazâlî and Ibn 'Arabî (with regard, e.g., to similar sayings of al-Hallâj)—that Balyânî's work and outlook (and by extension, that of Ibn Sab'în and other Sufis, especially poets, sometimes employing similar expressions) can best be understood as a sort of rhetorical reduction (or in some cases, possibly an unreflective "spiritual realism") which may be justified on its own plane, provided that the reader or listener is able to supply the necessary metaphysical (and practical) qualifications. Something of the same sort seems to have been true of Balyânî himself, if we may judge by his prudent reaction (as reported by Jâmî: see n. 11 above) to the disciple bitten by the

"systems" of later Sufi metaphysics—a distinction already noted by such critics as Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Khaldun—helps remind us of the symbolic (and inherently relative) nature of the particular expressions of any theoretical schema in this domain, a point whose decisive practical importance was not always openly acknowledged by Ibn ‘Arabî's commentators.[17]

The translator's discussion of Ibn Taymiyya's famous attacks on (among other things) the more systematic metaphysical pretensions of later Sufism also serves to bring out those distinctive features of Ibn ‘Arabî's writing which no doubt go far in explaining the overwhelming success of his "systematization" of Sufi doctrine in the later Islamic world when compared with the comparable efforts of such figures as Balyânî, Ibn Sab‘în, or Suhrawardi. Those characteristics, illustrated in detail in Mr. Chodkiewicz's invaluable notes, are essentially (a) his extraordinarily careful attention, in unfolding the inner meaning of scripture, to the significance of the "letter" and smallest details of expression of the Qur’an, *hadîth*, and Islamic ‘law’ (the *sharî‘a*); (b) his relative concentration on expressing his metaphysical insights in the vocabulary of kalam theology, rather than the suspect terminology of the philosophers; (c) his insistence on the central role of the Prophet, at every level of being, and of the superior efficacy (compared to other valid methods and paths) of the practical implementation of all of his teachings; and (d) his systematically balanced consideration of the needs and limitations of the full range of human types, capacities and social situations (not merely the spiritual elite) in his expression of his teachings.[18] Yet however important these features may have been, historically speaking, for the acceptance and wide-ranging influence of Ibn ‘Arabî's teaching throughout the Islamic world, it must

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poisonous snake he had taken for “God.”

[17] Although it is certainly assumed by the much wider group of Sufis—illustrated by the works of Nasafî and the later Qâdiri author discussed in the following two sections—who tended to assimilate individual "pieces" of Ibn ‘Arabî's terminology or teachings (e.g., concerning the "Perfect Human Being," *wahdat al-wujûd*, or *walaya* and prophecy) without the same concern for the systematic coherence and intellectual understanding of his thought that is so evident in Qûnawî and his successors. (In this regard, M. Chodkiewicz notes [p. 36] the interesting story of a meeting in Egypt between Ibn Sab‘în and Ibn ‘Arabî's two disciples Qûnawî and Tilimsânî, bringing out the latter's relatively greater affinities with Ibn Sab‘în—which are confirmed by his association, along with Shushtarî, as targets for later critiques of the "monist" *wujûdîya*.)

[18] Most of these characteristics are essentially shared, although in varying degrees, by al-Ghazâlî (i.e., Abu Hâmid—not his brother Ahmad) in his Sufi writings, and no doubt also help account for his similarly widespread veneration (as "Imam," etc.) among Sufis and non-Sufis alike.

also be admitted that they do not always facilitate its accessibility to a non-Muslim audience.

In this light, the widespread interest in Balyânî's work in the West—despite its ironic misattribution to Ibn 'Arabî—is not really so surprising. In many ways, its distinctive features are almost the opposite of those outlined above: there is (a) no explicit reference (except for a few hints at the very end) to the indispensable role of spiritual practice and experience, and to the decisive differences of human capacity in that regard; (b) no stress (to put it mildly) on the practical or metaphysical importance of the Prophet and the *sharî'a*, or indeed of any form of human responsibility, and (c) a corresponding emphasis (whose quietistic or antinomian implications are unavoidable) on the "illusory" nature of the world and the self; and (d) not only no appeal to the intellect and the intelligible order of the world at all levels of manifestation, but in fact a sort of "anti-intellectual" depreciation of any effort of either activity or understanding.[19] Moreover, the superficial resemblances of Balyânî's formulations to certain popular conceptions of Hindu thought (especially the role of "Mâya") are especially striking.[20] Although Mr. Chodkiewicz does not say so explicitly, there can be little doubt that the emphasis on the "universality" of the Shaykh's thought and teaching which has been a keynote of modern Western discussions owes a great deal to the facility (in both senses of the term) of Balyânî's little treatise. What he does demonstrate, convincingly and in detail, is that readers who take Balyânî to be Ibn 'Arabî will find it very difficult indeed to enter into the far more complex and challenging—if no less "universal"—world of

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[19] It is important, both historically and philosophically, to note that although these points certainly do *not* apply to Ibn 'Arabî or to many other Sufi writers and teachers and their followers—and seldom or never led to the dramatic antinomian excesses *(ibâha)* and heresies cited by the polemicists in every age—they do point to real and socially important practical trends in later Sufism, especially in its more "popular" and vulgarized forms, that were an evident target both of earlier critics such as Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Khaldûn and of modern "reformers" mainly concerned with the purported this-worldly effects of such ideas and corresponding popular customs. One illustration of these tendencies is the fact that the greater part of the dozens of apocryphal treatises attributed to Ibn 'Arabî, as listed by Osman Yahia, concern magical and occult practices (astrology, etc.)—precisely the sort of superstition that is one of the prime targets of Ibn Khaldun's lengthy attacks and "debunking" of Ibn 'Arabî most later Sufism in the *Muqaddima*.

[20] This should not at all be taken to deny that one can ultimately find very similar conceptions in Ibn 'Arabî's own thought; but like most Islamic esoteric *writers* (including Shiite thinkers and philosophers, as well as Sufis), he is usually reluctant to refer too directly to realities and phenomena which—if they were misunderstood—could lead to negligence of one's ethical and social responsibility (*taklîf*). This reticence is not always so evident in the actual oral teaching and methods of spiritual masters, and the relative "frankness" of Nasafî's writings (see below) may partly correspond to a more restricted original audience.

the Shaykh's own writings and teachings.

II. If we were to follow a strictly chronological order, Roger Deladrière's translation of the *Tadhkirat al-khawâss wa 'aqîdat ahl al-ikhtisâs* [*La Profession de foi*, Pp.317. Paris: Sindbad/Editions Orientales. 1978.)—a bizarre mixture of Hanbalite *'aqîda* (a doctrinal statement following a standard kalam-like framework) and turgid "Sufistic" sermonizing in the florid rhetoric of a 10th or 11th century (AH) Qâdirî author[21]—would come near the end of this article, illustrating the wide range of Ibn 'Arabî's formal or literary "influences" in later Sufism and the important fact that sort of influence was often relatively superficial, reflecting in many cases no serious understanding or study of his works.[22] However, we

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[21] Note the following example, illustrating both the author's prolix style and his Qadiri affiliation: "…incomparable masters of the esoteric Truth, illustrious links in a chain extending from my lord, master of the masters of knowing, the quintessence of the Saints in God's proximity *(muqarrabûn)* and of those who know with certainty *(muqînûn)*, the master of the Way and the source of the esoteric Truth *(ma'din al-Haqîqa)*, the master 'Abd al-Qâdir al-Jîlî—may God sanctify his sublime soul and illuminate his tomb" (pp. 103-4); "... our lord, our guide and our model in the path to God, the Shaykh Muhyî al-Dîn 'Abd al-Qâdir al-Jîlî (p. 142); and "… according to our lord the Shaykh 'Abd al-Qâdir (p. 165)—each of these preceding long citations from 'Abd al-Qâdir's famous *K. al-Ghunya li-Tâlibî Tarîq al-Haqq*.

The author of this work is evidently one "'Abd al-Samad al-Qâdirî," cited as such in two of the oldest of eight manuscripts—the earliest of them dating only from the 11th/17th century—used in the critical edition that formed part of the translator's dissertation (1974). (This information taken from the review by Prof. D. Gril in *Annales Islamologiques*, XX (1984), pp. 337-39, since these highly relevant facts are not mentioned in the brief notice concerning the edition given at the beginning of this published volume.) The work is not listed in either of Ibn 'Arabî's long lists of his own writings, and it is especially significant that the book itself contains no indication that the original author—i.e., as opposed to the modern translator—had the slightest pretense of attributing it to Ibn Arabi, especially since both the style and contents (apart from the specific borrowings mentioned below) are so totally incompatible with any of Ibn 'Arabî's known works.

Ibn 'Arabî (as noted by D. Gril in the above-mentioned review) occasionally does mention 'Abd al-Qâdir, including a spiritual encounter with him in the *barzakh*, but not with the sort of worshipful quotation of lengthy passages (and the almost idolatrous encomiums) found in the sections cited above. Likewise, the close association of Hanbalism and Qâdiri Sufism evidenced here is not surprising (although it is by no means the rule among later Qâdirîs either), given that 'Abd al-Qâdir himself was a fervent Hanbalite preacher (see article 'Abd al-Kadir al-Djîlânî" in *EI*^{2}, I, pp. 68-70) and that many other Hanbalites, perhaps even more than with some of the other legal *madhhab*s, were also prominent Sufis, including most notably 'Abdullâh Ansârî of Herat. (The notorious critiques of Sufism by Ibn Taymiyya and other later Hanbalite *fuqahâ'*, sometimes themselves associated with more "moderate" orders, were commonly directed at what they considered reprehensible "excesses or innovations.")

[22] And sometimes, as in this case (see below), actually turning up in contexts almost

shall mention it here because, like Balyânî's work (only perhaps more so), it offers an ideal opportunity to bring out further characteristic and fundamental features of Ibn 'Arabî's spiritual teaching and method—precisely because its style, content, and intentions (aside from the few passages borrowed literally from his writings) are so totally different from those of the Shaykh al-Akbar.

Unfortunately, rather than using this work (which is otherwise of only limited historical interest) for that purpose, Professor Deladrière has astonishingly chosen to accept—or more honestly, to promote[23]—its attribution to Ibn 'Arabî. His motives for this pious deed are clearly stated at the end of his Introduction (p.78):

> "Thus it seemed to us that the best means of unquestionably refuting every accusation against Muhyî al-Dîn [by "Ibn Taymiyya as representative of the *Sharî'a*"] was to publish his Profession of Faith, which is in perfect agreement with the doctrine of the *Ahl al-Sunna wa-l-jamâ'a*"[24]

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diametrically opposed to the spirit. and intentions of his teaching. (See also the general observations of Professor Schimmel with regard to the widespread later poetic usage of Ibn 'Arabî's technical terminology, cited in n. 2 above.)

[23] Given the obvious Hanbalite-Qâdirî allegiance and much later Arabic style of this work (see n. 21 above), which could scarcely escape even a beginning student, one must choose between two hypotheses concerning the translator: either unusual negligence—which is difficult to imagine, given his able rendering of the Arabic and evident learning (including considerable study of Ibn 'Arabî's own works) that are manifested both here and in his earlier articles and later excellent translations of several Sufi "classics" [including Ghazâlî's *Mishkât al-Anwar* (ref. at n. 13 above), Kalâbâdhî's *K. al-Ta'arruf* (*Traité de soufisme: les Maîtres et les Étapes*, Paris, Sindbad, 1981), and the collected fragments and sayings of Junayd (*Junayd: Enseignement spirituel*), Paris, Sindbad, l983]—or a sort of well-intentioned "pious fraud" reminiscent of Farabi's similar use of Plotinus (of the *Theology)* as "Aristotle" for the purposes of his famous exoteric "Harmonization" of Plato and Aristotle.

Not only does the translator carefully refrain from mentioning all the most obvious signs of the true authorship just mentioned (n. 21), which could scarcely fail to strike even the most naive reader of the French version (much less the Arabic), but in discussing (pp.32-39) the *'aqîda* borrowed from the beginning of the *Futûhât,* he forthrightly misrepresents it as the Shaykh's "major" profession of faith (the following passages being dismissed as "two other minor professions of faith") in a way that is more or less the exact *contrary* of what one actually finds stated repeatedly and explicitly in precisely those same passages of the *Futûhât.* (See below, notes 27, 29-31.)

[24] Despite the tendentious nature of the latter part of the Introduction (pp. 32ff.), the two opening sections (pp. 11-31) do contain some valuable biographical information on Ibn 'Arabî, and a brief discussion of his supposed "Zâhirî" tendencies in *fiqh.* However, while we have already stressed the relative negligence of these elements of the Shaykh's thought

Unfortunately, while there is indeed no doubt about the "pure doctrinal orthodoxy" (p.76) of this particular book from that particular point of view—since its author's stated purpose, from first to last, is to outline the simple creed of the *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jamâ'a* (the epithet the Hanbalites applied to themselves and those rare Muslims they approved of) and to show how the other 72 troublemaking "sects" of Islam (not to mention the rest of humanity!) are all eternally damned to Hellfire—one wonders whether even the most obtuse of those "*Hashawîya*" would ever have given credence to its attribution to Ibn ‘Arabî.

The framework of the book as a whole (sections 1-13 and 159-65, in the translator's division), as we have just indicated, is the famous *hadîth* of the "73 sects," interpreted here—in the polemic (in fact often fanatic) heresiographical language used throughout the work—to exclude from the single "saved sect" all Muslims but the author's own handpicked group, who are defined by the Hanbalite *‘aqîda* outlined in the intervening sections: chapters on *Tawhîd*, the "Reality of the Prophet," Faith, and the first four Sunni Imams and their rank (sections 88-158, the main body of the work). In all but the first two chapters, there is nothing remotely resembling the treatment of those subjects in any of the known works of Ibn ‘Arabî, and indeed their Hanbalite dogmatism and polemic intention leave little room for more than brief allusions to the author's apparent Qâdirî Sufism. The visible "influences" of Ibn ‘Arabî, apart from one or two verses,[25] are some very brief quotations in the section on the "Reality of the Prophet,"[26] plus the opening *‘aqîda* (sections 14-27), which is quoted in part—with some

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and background in Western literature until recently (a tendency itself reflecting later Islamic treatments of Ibn ‘Arabî's intellectual "system" in relative separation from its practical, operative spiritual dimensions), readers would certainly be better advised to consult Ibn ‘Arabî's own, quite radically different treatment of those traditional materials—as illustrated in several of the recent translations mentioned in Part I—rather than this Hanbalite document, which is far removed from Ibn ‘Arabî's typical understanding and spiritual depth of treatment of those scriptural and traditional materials.

[25] In addition to those items identified by the translator, D. Gril (in the review cited in n. 21 above) also mentions the poem borrowed at the end and in section 26. The fact that none of these borrowings are explicitly referred to Ibn ‘Arabî is certainly understandable in the author's Hanbalite setting, where the Shaykh's name was by no means universally revered, to say the least.

[26] Again, most of these passages, as the translator indicates, seem to he paraphrased from the *Shajarat al-Kawn* or other works concerning the "Muhammadan Reality": Prof. Gril (see n. 21) has recognized section 57, e.g., as a quotation from Ibn ‘Arabî's *R. al-Ittihâd al-Kawnî*, the text he edited and translated (see our review of that work in Part I of this essay). It is typical, however, that those borrowings are used here in an apologetic, defensive, and historicist sense which reflects a complete misunderstanding (or intentional

brief but significant additions and exclusions—from Ibn ‘Arabî's *Muqaddima* to the *Futûhât*. However, what is significant about these two brief "borrowings"[27]—and so representative of much subsequent popular use of Ibn ‘Arabî's work—is that they are ultimately literary or stylistic, phrases and terminology borrowed without any (implicit or explicit) reference to or deeper understanding of their original systematic context and implications.[28]

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misrepresentation) of Ibn ‘Arabî's own distinctively ontological (and therefore necessarily universal) use of these concepts. (See also notes 27-28 below.)

[27] This *'aqîda* corresponds very roughly to the *Futûhât* I, pp.36.6-38.3, but with some very significant internal changes and omissions—not to mention the suppression of Ibn ‘Arabî's essential qualifications of this passage (see nn. 29-31)—which are especially revealing of this Hanbalite author's radically different understanding and intentions. One especially striking example is the passage on the divine "Speech" *(kalâm),* which in this version (Section 24, p. 98 of the translation) becomes a series of separate outward *historical* acts: "... By it He spoke to Moses and He called it Torah; by it He spoke to David and called it Psalms, to Jesus and called it Gospel…" (including lines completely absent from the *Futûhât* here in any form!).

In the corresponding passage in the *Futûhât* (I, p.38, lines 20-21) one finds something entirely different from this literalist, historicist Hanbalite perspective: "... with this [Speech] He spoke to Moses, and He called it Revelation (*tanzîl*), Psalms, Torah, and Gospels, *without letters or sounds or voice or languages*..." What Ibn ‘Arabî is referring to here is already quite clearly—although his meaning is amplified in hundreds of later pages throughout the *Futûhât*—precisely the eternal spiritual Reality which is at once the Source of all historical "revelations" and the common object of the path and teachings of the *awliyâ'* in *any* historical or religious setting. As always in Ibn ‘Arabî—and that is precisely the point of *his* “credo of the *'awâmm*”—this formulation encompasses and illuminates the popular comprehension of the Hanbalites (and indeed of virtually all the other "schools," in this and other religions), but it is in no way reducible to that limited vision, and in fact directs readers precisely beyond whatever partial (“believed”, in Ibn ‘Arabî’s terms) mental images and conceptions they may happen to have of that Reality.

[28] This is especially obvious in this author's references to the "Muhammadan Reality," which here is little more than empty boasting on a sectarian historical level, without the any inkling of the meaning and implications of that central term in Ibn ‘Arabî's own writing. (As such, it is a typical illustration of the sort of literary "influence" of Ibn ‘Arabî's terminology and concepts without any serious understanding of what they represent, and indeed often in ways quite contrary to his intentions: see already nn. 2, 26, and the entire section on Nasafî below.) In Ibn ‘Arabî, for example, this Reality (with its many equivalent names: see S. al-Hakim, *al-Mu'jam al-Sufi* [discussed in Part I, n. l], pp. 347-52 and 158-68, plus the long list of cross-references in each case) is consistently treated in a way that brings out its universal, ongoing manifestations, both in Islam and other religions (and prophets) and at all the relevant levels of the "Perfect Human Being" *(insân kâmil).* It is perhaps worth adding that in Ibn ‘Arabî these implications and manifestations are by no means a matter of some abstract theoretical "system," but of concrete and particular realizations in the life of each individual. (The best available illustration to this theme is in the recent translations and commentaries on the *Fusûs al-Hikam* discussed in Part I.)

This point is especially clearly—and ironically—illustrated in the case of the opening *'aqîda* borrowed from the *Futûhât*. For Ibn 'Arabî, far from being the "credo of the elite" as in the title of this work (*'aqîdat ahl al-ikhtisâs*), it is described as the "credo of the commoners ... among the peoples of *taqlîd*,"[29] and is immediately followed by two long, extremely complex symbolic and mystical discussions which together make up what Ibn 'Arabî explicitly calls his own—how radically and irreducibly different!—*'aqîdat ahl al-ikhtisâs min ahl Allâh*.[30] But that second stage is only the beginning: "Now as for the *'aqîda* concerning God of the quintessence of the elite (*khulâsat al-khâssa*), that is a matter even above this one, which we have spread throughout this book …"[31] In other words, the ground

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[29] The precise terms of Ibn 'Arabî's descriptions of this *'aqîda*, both preceding and immediately following it, are extremely important and deserve to be cited in full, although we cannot elaborate here on the technical meanings of each of the terms he uses. *Futûhât* I, p. 37.5: "Appendix, containing what should be believed (*i'tiqâd*) among the common public *(al-'umûm, hoi polloi*): it is the credo of the people of outward submission *(islam),* accepted *(musallama)* without any inquiry *(nazar)* into (rational or scriptural) indications (*dalîl)* or (spiritual and experiential) proof *(burhân).* *Futûhât*, I, p.38: "So this [preceding statement, including a long concluding section not used by the Hanbalite author] is the credo of the masses *('awâmm)* among the people of submission *(islâm),* the people of *taqlîd*, and the people of *nazar* [in Ibn 'Arabî's usage, primarily the *mutakallimun,* but also similar types of philosophers], summarized and abridged." The full meaning of these terms will be recognized by those who have frequented Ibn 'Arabî's works. In any event, there can be little doubt that such terms as *'awamm* and *taqlîd* refer here—as likewise in many other traditions of Islamic thought—to precisely the sort of rigorous non-thinking (by no means exclusively Hanbalite) so perfectly illustrated and defended in this particular book.

[30] *Futûhât* I, p. 47, lines 7-8. This description of the intervening sections (pp. 41-47) as summarizing "the belief of the people of the *elite* among the people of God (one of Ibn 'Arabî's favorite expression's for the true Sufis) who are between intellectual inquiry *(nazar)* and experiential unveiling" (I, p. 41.3) has been quoted because it provides such an ironic commentary on the pretensions evident in this later Hanbalite text. In Ibn 'Arabî's longer description (I, p.38, lines 22-28) of these two "intermediate" and already more distinctively Sufi "creeds"—entirely different, incidentally, in their subjects and forms of expression—he describes these true *"ahl al-ikhtisâs*" as "the elite of the people of God among the people of the Path of God, those who truly realize the divine Truth (*al-muhaqqiqun,* in its Sufi usage), the people of direct spiritual unveiling *(kashf)* and true Being (or "ecstatic finding," *wujûd*)." To describe this stage as "minor" (as the translator does), in relation to the preceding credo (n. 29), represents a perspective which—although no doubt faithfully Hanbalite—is certainly radically different from Ibn 'Arabî's.

[31] *Futûhât* I, p.47, lines 7ff.: the passage continues "… because most intellects, *being veiled by their thoughts*, are unable to perceive this because of their lack of (spiritual) purification *(tajrîd*)" (emphasis ours). The fact that the *Futûhât* in its entirety contains clear but "dispersed" allusions to the highest spiritual reality and truth, which each reader must "put together" according to the degree of their spiritual insight, is stated even more clearly at

and true meaning of Ibn ‘Arabî's opening *‘aqîda*—and the immeasurable distance separating it from the perspective of this one-dimensional Hanbalite "profession of faith"—can only be fully appreciated by one who has assimilated all the teachings and insights of the *Futûhât* and (most importantly) the profound spiritual realization underlying them.

No doubt the translator of this work is quite justified in insisting throughout his Introduction that Ibn ‘Arabî was indeed "muslim," "sunni," "orthodox" (and many other things besides),[32] but readers of this work will learn nothing—and indeed are likely to be seriously misled about the deeper, perennial dimensions of such terms in the life and teaching of the Shaykh and the ways he suggests they can be realized (the crucial dimension of *tahqîq*). "*Ahl al-sunna*," like "catholic," has several possible levels of meaning. As we have indicated in Part I of this article, both *kalâm* and *fiqh* are extremely important—and still largely unstudied—aspects of Ibn ‘Arabî's thought, especially in the *Futûhât*. But his distinctive personal treatment and multidimensional understanding of both subjects, consistently transcending the sectarian and dogmatic approach of the traditional *madhâhib*, is a sort of polar opposite to the fanatic dogmatism of this later Hanbalite tract.

III. The widely read Persian works of the Kubrâwî shaykh ‘Azîz al-Nasafî (d. late 7th/13th century) illustrate some important aspects of the initial reception of Ibn ‘Arabî's work, on a more practical and less purely theoretical level, among Persian and Central Asian Sufis, a movement that is already evident in the direct relations of Nasafî's own master Sa‘d al-Dîn al-Hamû’î (d. 650/1253) with both Ibn ‘Arabî and Sadr al-Dîn al-Qûnawî.[33] Not only does

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I, p. 38, lines 25-28: "Those [clearer statements of the Truth] are separated and scattered, as we have mentioned. So may he on whom God has bestowed their understanding recognize (the truth of) their matter and distinguish them from the other things. For that is the True Knowledge *(al-'ilm al-haqq)* and the Authentic Saying (*al-qawl al-sidq)*. There is no goal beyond It, and *'the blind and the truly seeing are not alike*' [cf. Qur’an 6:50, etc.] in Its regard …".

[32] See n. 24 and the discussions of translated genuine works of Ibn ‘Arabî partly illustrating these points, as he understood them, in Part I.

[33] For Hamû’î's contacts with Qûnawî and a description of the contents of his letter to Ibn ‘Arabî, see M. Molé's Introduction to his edition of the *Kitâb al-Insân al-Kâmil* (and several other collections of short treatises) of Nasafî, Tehran/Paris, 1962, pp. 7-8. Since Hamû’î knew Qûnawî in Damascus before Ibn ‘Arabî's death, it seems almost certain that he did have some personal contact with the Shaykh. Hamû’î’s influence is visible throughout Nasafî's works, where he is constantly cited as "our master," etc.: see the further discussion of

Nasafi's work (like that of Balyânî above) represent a vital, long-established current of Sufi thought and expression in its own right (in which, following Tirmidhî, the more theoretical writings—often in Persian—of Ahmad Ghazâlî and ‘Ayn al-Qudât Hamadânî had played a formative role), but at the same time it brings out quite sharply, even more than Balyânî, the vast range of problems and complex issues (both practical and theoretical) that had already come to the forefront in the development of Sufism prior to Ibn ‘Arabî, and which in large part helped structure both his own creative response and the subsequent uses and transformations of his writings in the eastern Islamic world. Moreover, the comparison of Ibn ‘Arabî and Nasafî (and the tendencies their differing formulations represent) is not only historically illuminating. It is also a salutary philosophic reminder of the full range of ethical, political, theological, and practical problems that one inevitably encounters (in any cultural context) in attempting to realize the deeper spiritual intentions of those writers (or of the prophets who are their own guides and inspiration).[34]

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their relations in Molé's Introduction, op. cit., pp.7-21.

A number of early shaykhs of the Kubrawiya order have been closely studied in works by several scholars which together give us probably the most detailed picture, both in quantity and quality of discussion, of any comparable period and region of Sufi activity. (These studies also make it clear that Hamû’î’s and Nasafi's relative interest in the ontological and theoretical aspects of Ibn ‘Arabî's work was not shared by other important contemporaries in that same "order": see, e.g., the references to Simnânî below.)

For Nasafî himself, see also two studies by F. Meier, "Das Problem der Natur im esoterischen Monismus des Islams," *Eranos-Jahrbuch* 14 (1946), pp. 149-227, and "Die Schriften des ‘Azîz al-Nasafî," pp.125-82 in the *Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes* 52(1953), as well as M. Molé's article on "Les Kubrawiyya entre sunnisme et shiisme," *Revue des études islamiques,* 1961. The classic study of Najm al-Dîn Kubrâ himself is F. Meier's German introduction to his edition, *Die "fawâ’ih al-ðamâl wa fawâtih al-ðalâl" des Naðmuddîn al-Kubrâ,* Wiesbaden, 1957. For Nûr al-Dîn Isfarâyinî (and his disciple Simnânî, discussed further at n. 80 below), see especially the long Introduction to H. Landolt's edition of his *Correspondance spirituelle* (with Simnânî), (Tehran/ Paris, 1972), and his Introduction, translation of Isfarâyinî’s *Kâshif al-Asrâr,* and edition of that work and related Persian letters of spiritual guidance in *Kâshif al-Asrâr* (Tehran. 1358/1980). This latter work, which in fact constitutes a history of many aspects of the early Kubrâwîya order more generally, has now been republished, in a revised and more accessible version, as *Le Révélateur des Mystères: traité de soufisme* (Paris, Verdier, 1986). For more detailed bibliography (including many other studies by Meier and Molé), see both Landolt, op. cit., and R. Gramlich, *Die schiitischen Derwischorden Persiens,* Wiesbaden, 1965 (Part I) and 1967 (Part II), which also offers a broader historical perspective on this movement. For the important figure of Najm al-Dîn Râzî, see n. 62 below.

[34] Seen in this light, detailed historical research (whether socio-cultural or "doctrinal" and philological in focus) can be of considerable philosophic value, even when the researchers themselves are relatively unconcerned with the spiritual dimensions of their

The wide diffusion and lasting popular influence of Nasafi's writings—a success which may be explainable, at least in part, precisely by their characteristic directness and relative lack of subtlety and overt systematic concerns (whether theoretical or practical)—can be judged by the profusion of manuscripts and early translations (especially Turkish) of his works. Their relative accessibility is no doubt also reflected in the remarkable series of Western versions of his brief *Maqsad-i Aqsâ* which for several centuries constituted one of the few translated sources on Sufism in Europe, beginning with A. Mueller's Turkish edition and Latin translation (Brandenburg, 1665), then F. Tholuck's influential handbook on "the pantheistic theosophy of the Persians" (Berlin, 1821), and E. H. Palmer's English "paraphrase" [*Oriental Mysticism: a Treatise on Sufiistic and Unitarian Theosophy of the Persians*. Pp. xiv + 84. London: Frank Cass. 1969. (Reprint of 1867 edition.)].[35] Yet while it is not difficult to recognize, with considerable regret, the wider intellectual consequences of taking a work like the *Maqsad-i Aqsâ* (and moreover, in a truncated, grossly inadequate summary) as somehow intellectually or spiritually representative of "Sufism" in general, Palmer's paraphrase does retain a certain usefulness for specialists who can approach it with an awareness of the underlying text and its historical background, since Nasafî sometimes

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subject. One of the limitations of translations of Sufi texts aimed mainly at "introducing" "Sufism," which still includes most of the English books readily available to students, is that they tend to present an idealized, abstract image leaving out the full range of actual problems and issues (with their historical particularities) with which individual Sufis have necessarily always been involved. The studies just mentioned (n. 33) are especially helpful in that regard, in that they help bring out aspects of Sufi practice (and life in a particular medieval society) which were often taken for granted in mystical *literature*—and for that reason are often "invisible" to modern readers.

[35] For details on the manuscripts and translations, see Molé's edition of *al-Insân al-Kâmil* (n. 33 above), pp. 1 and 28-56, as well as F. Meier's article on Nasafî's writing's (ref. at n. 33).

Palmer's opening assertion (p. ix) that "this work was originally written in Turkish and translated into Persian by Khwarazim Shah" gives some idea of its overall accuracy and quality. The exactitude and method of his "paraphrase"—which completely alters Nasafî's chapter divisions, and in which it is often impossible to decide where Palmer is interjecting his own extraneous remarks—can be judged by comparing his "Part III" (pp. 43-44, on *walâya* and *nubuwwa),* with Molé's complete translation (roughly twice as long) of the corresponding chapter 5 of Nasafî's work (at pp. 15-18 of his Introduction to the above-mentioned edition). The reprint publisher's assertion (on the jacket) that "Some works stand the test of time better than others" and that this one "is still an indispensable tool for Islamic scholars" is an ironic illustration—among the multitude that could be cited by any teacher in this or other areas of Islamic thought—of the long-lasting damage that can be done by inadequately prepared and annotated translations of important works, not least by discouraging any subsequent attempt at a more adequate treatment.

states his own opinions more explicitly there than elsewhere.[36]

Fortunately, though, Isabelle de Gastines' recent translation of two of Nasafî's longer writings, the *Manâzil-i Sâ'irîn* and *Insân-i Kâmil* [*Le Livre de l'Homme Parfait*. Pp.381. Paris: Fayard. 1984.], gives a far more comprehensive and revealing view of this fascinating figure. Both "books" included in this translation are actually collections of Nasafî's letters in response to questions from his disciples or other Sufis; these particular titles, the overall order and number of treatises, and even the prefaces purporting to explain that order all seem to have been added (or at least revised) after their original composition, either by Nasafî or by later "editors."[37] While raising a number of serious interpretive problems, the particular

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[36] Most notably on the question of *walâya* and *nubuwwa* (= Palmer, pp.43-44), according to discussions by M. Molé and F. Meier, referring to the relations between the *Maqsad* and Nasafî's longer *Kashf al-Haqâ'iq*: see, e.g., Molé, pp.15-27 of the Introduction to *al-Insân al-Kâmil*. Another advantage of the *Maqsad*, when compared, for example, to the texts included in *Le livre de l'Homme Parfait*, is its relative concision and systematic form, which brings out more clearly the overall structure of Nasafî's concerns—although one would hesitate to call this a "system," if compared to the intellectual coherence evident in Ibn 'Arabî and his commentators discussed below. Unfortunately, even with some awareness of the likely Persian and Arabic equivalents, one can never be very sure how close Palmer's "paraphrase" is to the original terms. (For the full measure of the exactitude and complexity of that original terminology, whether in Persian or Arabic, see the many illustrations in the notes to H. Landolt's translation of Isfarâyinî's *Kâshif al-Asrâr* [n. 33 above] and the detailed French and Persian indexes to that study. Many of Prof. Landolt's "notes" there—reminiscent of Kraus's famous *Jâbir ibn Hayyân*—are actually separate monographs on the development of these Sufi concepts and technical terms.)

[37] See Molé's introduction to his edition for an explanation of the complex and problematic manuscript history of these works, all of which later circulated under many name's, with the same treatise often appearing in roughly the same form in several different collections. In addition to a vast number of ordinary variant readings (pp.488-557), Molé also includes (pp. 444-82) long alternate sections (often equivalent to several pages in translation) found in certain manuscripts of these treatises. The French translation contains no reference to those serious problems which have a potentially important bearing on how one interprets the work as a whole—e.g., how much is Nasafî's own writing, what may have been changed or interpolated by later compilers, etc. The title adopted here, as Molé notes (intro., p. 38), is almost certainly due to a later compiler, and quite possibly to a confusion with Jîlî's much more systematic and celebrated work (see below) of the same name.

In general, readers should be cautioned that the translator here—as in her preceding version of Attar's *Musîbatnâmeh* (*Le livre de l'épreuve*, Paris, Fayard, 1981, with preface by A. Schimmel)—has adopted a relatively popular or free literary method of translation (often paraphrasing or dropping several lines, and with essentially no explanatory introduction, detailed notes, or index) directed toward the "general public" in the broadest sense. The result is often less repetitive and more immediately "readable" and aesthetically pleasing (to our modern taste), but at the same time tends to obscure those meanings and issues that would require any more extensive acquaintance with the author and his historical context. (Those

circumstances of their composition do go a long way toward explaining some of the most striking characteristics of both of these works, features which make this translation especially fascinating, if also sometimes frustrating, reading

Those unusual characteristics, which in many respects are certainly typical of the behavior of a living shaykh with his disciples (but *not* so commonly of Sufi prose works destined for an indeterminate public), include: (a) Nasafî's relative disorder and lack of concern for formal systematic coherence, whether in his practical advice or in his treatment of theological and metaphysical issues, an impression that may be partly explicable by the different inner aptitudes and conditions of his particular correspondents; (b) his open, informal style, showing no fear of (apparently) contradicting himself or admitting his own uncertainty and hesitation on crucial issues, sometimes verging on a systematic skepticism—features which are remarkably revealing (for medieval Islamic literature) of Nasafî's own character and personality; and (c) his apparent (but as we shall see, quite problematic) "openness" and explicitness in discussing the most controversial esoteric questions. All these distinctive features—which are sometimes so striking here, when compared with most classical Sufi prose, that one could almost imagine oneself in California[38]—may also reflect the widespread socio-political disorder and consequent greater freedom of expression in Ilkhanid Iran and Central Asia after the Mongol invasion.[39] But more importantly, they are

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interested in Nasafî himself or the Kubrâwîya, for example, will therefore still have to refer directly to the Persian texts and studies cited above.)

[38] By this we are referring to Nasafî's remarkably open, relatively non-dogmatic, and frequently pragmatic or even "experimental" attitude—as in his repeated indications of uncertainty as to whether withdrawal from this world, or (ascetic) participation in it, is a better spiritual method—and his continued acknowledgment of the 'spiritual "data," focusing on what actually works in a given case. As just noted, these characteristics may actually be typical of many Sufi masters in their real life, but they are rather striking when compared to most of the *literature* of Islamic mysticism, in which (as with the Hanbali/Qadiri text discussed above) theological considerations of one sort or another are usually much more visible. (This impression may also have to do in part with the free and uncommented nature of this particular translation, as indicated in the preceding note.)

[39] This extremely unusual set of political circumstances—in which Islam (and Sunni forms in particular) actually ceased to be the state religion and (to some extent, at least) the state-enforced law for close to a century—is cited in a variety of connections in the studies by Landolt, Molé, and Meier mentioned above (n. 33): the eventful political role of Sufis like Isfarâyinî, in particular, is discussed in detail in H. Landolt's introduction to his *Kâshif al-Asrâr*, pp. 15-19 and related notes. The broader importance of these socio-political conditions—including the control of *waqf* endowments by the Shiite philosopher and scientist Nasîr al-Dîn al-Tûsî, as Mongol *wazîr*—in encouraging the spread of Avicennan philosophy

also indicative of certain broader (both earlier and ongoing) Sufi traditions and tendencies in that region (already visible, for example, in Balyânî's work, but dramatically illustrated in many Persian Sufi poets) that helped determine the particular forms of "reception" of Ibn ‘Arabî's writings —just as earlier, in the case of al-Tirmidhî or certain Shiite sources, they had helped shape the problems that Ibn ‘Arabî was intent on resolving.

The significant contrasts between Nasafî and Ibn ‘Arabî are equally apparent whether we consider their treatment of the practical questions of spiritual discipline and method or more "theoretical" and doctrinal issues. Here we shall concentrate on a few typical theological/ philosophical questions, since they so clearly illustrate the types of widespread, potentially controversial problems for which Ibn ‘Arabî's works, through their adaptation by Qûnawî and later interpreters (discussed below), were subsequently to provide more adequate and widely accepted solutions. These closely interrelated problems—since all of them are only facets of what Nasafî (following many other Sufis and Shiite thinkers) understands by the different dimensions of human beings' "Resurrection" (*qiyâma*)—are (1) the relation of *nubuwwa* (or *risâla*, i.e., prescriptive prophecy) and *walâya*, as bound up with (2) the theory of cosmic and historical cycles; (3) the successive lives and forms of existence involved in the gradual perfection of the soul; and (4) his understanding of the position of the "people of Unity" (*ahl-i vahdat*), in relation to the rest of mankind. If Nasafî (like his master Hamû'î) was already aware of some of Ibn ‘Arabî's theories in these and related areas, his very limited adaptation of them only serves to underline the more fundamental distance separating the two

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and "speculative mysticism" (among other "heterodox" movements) in the eastern Islamic world, is evoked by W. Madelung in his “Ibn Abî Jumhûr al-Ahsâ'î's Synthesis of *kalâm*, Philosophy, and Sufism," now readily available in his *Religious Schools and Sects in Medieval Islam*, London, 1985, selection XIII (pp. 147-56). (See also the illustrative case of Ibn Abî Jumhûr's open positive reference to the transmigration of human souls, n. 46 below.)

It should be stressed that the consequences of this temporary period of relative "intellectual freedom" were quite different from (if not indeed the exact opposite of) those following the Safavid imposition of clerical Twelver Shiism several centuries later. The widespread veneration of ‘Ali and concern with *walâya* that is so evident with Nasafî and other Sufis of this time—and which is more closely analyzed in an extensive literature which can be found in the works cited at n. 33—seem to have had little or nothing to do with the quite distinct learned Twelver Shiite legal and *hadîth* schools during this period. (The case of the Ismaili movement after the Mongol invasions seems to have been quite different: there the interpenetrations with Iranian Sufism were so profound that Sufis like Nasafî (see Molé's introduction, pp. 20-27) and Shabistârî (see H. Corbin's edition and translation of an Ismaili commentary on his *Gulshân-i Râz* [*Trilogie ismaélienne*, Paris/Tehran, 1961, pp. 1-174 of the French translation, section III]) were apparently "adopted" as their own by later Persian Ismailis.

perspectives.[40] In each of these cases (and in many others), Nasafî's underlying approach is basically the same, characterized by (a) an ostensible "openness" (which, from Ibn ‘Arabî's standpoint, would instead probably be characterized as an illusory literalism and reductive vulgarization) concerning the "esoteric" (*bâtin*) dimension of the spiritual path; and (b) a concomitant elitist disregard—indeed sometimes an almost dualistic or gnostic disdain—for every aspect of "this world" (including the *zâhir* of religion and prophecy) and the mass of men who are deluded into taking it as their sole reality.

That these characteristics are not simply a matter of rhetorical emphasis and partial expression (as they may well be in certain poets) can be seen most clearly here in Nasafî's understanding of the *walî* (or *valî*, in Persian), who for him—in a conception totally different from what one finds in Ibn ‘Arabî'—is the "*Sâhib al-Zamân*," a messianic figure whom Nasafî (like his teacher Hamû’î) apparently took to be a particular historical individual who was shortly coming, in his own lifetime, to transform totally the human condition so that the *sharî‘a* (and "*zâhir*" in general) would no longer be necessary and only the esoteric Truth (the *bâtin*) would rule.[41] His own openly historicist, non-symbolic conception of that function (or

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[40] In the *Maqsad-i Aqsâ* (Palmer's paraphrase), note the discussion of the *Fusûs al-Hikam* (p.55) and of a dispute between Qûnawî and Hamû’î concerning the divine Names and Attributes (pp. 27-28). More generally, as in parts of *al-Insân al-Kâmil*, one can see Ibn ‘Arabî's positions being taken into account in regard to such questions as *tawhîd* or the "unity of Being," *walâya*, the *a'yân thâbita* (where Ibn ‘Arabî is cited by name, p.296), or the "Perfect Human Being" (a far less important topic in this collection than the subsequently imposed title might suggest). While the very interest in these metaphysical and cosmological topics does distinguish Nasafî and Hamû’î from a far more practice-oriented Kubrâwî shaykh like Isfarâyinî (see references in n. 33 above), for example, it is also clear that Nasafî is dealing with Ibn ‘Arabî's contributions (which here, as so often throughout later Eastern Islamic culture, seem to be essentially limited to the *Fusûs*) on something like a case-by-case basis—as though in conversation with another respected shaykh about matters with which each is familiar—with little sense of either his overall systematic coherence or the supreme respect for his teachings that certainly characterizes all the commentator figures in the "school" of Qûnawî discussed below. A particularly obvious example of this relative "independence"—although it would probably be more accurate and useful to take Nasafî as often representing precisely the sort of typical, relatively disorganized discussion of these questions prior to their transformation by Ibn ‘Arabî—is his discussion of the "Perfect Human Being," pp.16-22 in the translation, where that symbol is dealt with primarily as a particular human individual, an ideal human type, with little emphasis on the transcendent, cosmic dimensions that are always so prominent in Ibn ‘Arabî.

[41] For the historicity of Nasafî's conception (following Hamû’î), see his dream of the Prophet in n. 42 below. Nasafî's own views on this question must be carefully distinguished from (1) Ibn ‘Arabî's views concerning the relations of *walâya*, *nubuwwa*, and *risâla*, which have little to do with the particular point Nasafî is discussing in terms of the "*walî*" [See now

rather, of that individual)—and the wider antinomian dangers of such popular messianic beliefs—are aptly illustrated in his observations about the many pretenders to this role who were springing up throughout Iran in his time: their failures did not seem to shake his own profound assurance that such an individual was about to come (and would even approve the teaching and promulgation of Nasafi's own books!).[42] His expectation of this forthcoming transformation of the human condition was apparently bound up with his beliefs concerning a series of cosmic cycles—of 1000, 7000, and 49,000 years—that make up, at least on one plane of interpretation, what Nasafî understands by the "lesser," "great," and "greatest" Resurrections.[43] While one can find superficially similar notions of cosmic cycles in both Ibn

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the comprehensive study of these subjects in Michel Chodkiewicz, *Le Sceau des saints—prophétie et sainteté dans la doctrine d'Ibn 'Arabî* (Paris, Gallimard, 1986)]; (2) Ibn 'Arabî's conception of the *Mahdî*, which is more closely related to this point; and (3) Twelver Shiite and Ismaili Shiite conceptions of the *Mahdî*, *Walî*, and *Sâhib al-Zamân*, which are again closest to Nasafi's terminology, although that similarity is unlikely to reflect any dogmatic theological "allegiance" on either his or Hamû'î's part (see Molé's [ertomemt discussion in his introduction to the edition of this text, pp. 20-27).

What sets Nasafî apart from all of the above—or at least from their more spiritual conceptions, if not the popular messianic misunderstandings—is precisely his historical "literalism" and apparent belief that the Mahdi will totally transform the human condition by *doing away with* the *sharî'a* and *zâhir*, rather than (as in many *hadîth* cited by Ibn 'Arabî) coming to hold all humanity to the *sharî'a*—or more precisely, ruling according to the *bâtin* of the (true, eternal, divine) *sharî'a*. While not denying the validity of the many traditions concerning the transformations to take place at the "end of time" (about which, moreover, they differ in other important respects). both Ibn 'Arabî and most Shiite thinkers alike tended instead to stress the *present* meaning or potential of those transformations as an inner spiritual reality—and not as somehow "doing away with" the *zâhir* of this world and its "relative reality." The inseparability of the two aspects has obvious practical implications for their attitude toward human beings' ongoing external religious (and legal and socio-political) duties as well.

[42] See the translation of Nasafi's dream of his encounter with the Prophet and his master Hamû'î, taken from the preface to his *Kashf al-Haqâ'iq* (Molé, intro. to *al-Insan*... pp.8-9), in which the Prophet assures him that after the year 700, most of the students in the *madrasas* will be studying his writings. Perhaps even more significant, in light of what we have already noted about the striking "openness" of Nasafi's statements, is Hamû'î's remark, in the same dream, that "*he* (i.e., Nasafi) *strives to proclaim openly and unveil everything which I had tried to hide and conceal*" (p.9).

[43] In this view (pp. 334-36 of the translation), the lesser, 1000-year "resurrection" involves the establishment of a *new sharî'a* throughout the earth (the concordance of this millennium with his immediate expectation of the *valî* after only 700 years is not explained; perhaps he would rule until the coming of a new law-giving prophet), while the two greater cycles involve partial and total cosmic cataclysms, each wiping out all animal and plant life, which then begins over in a new cycle. This chapter of the *Manâzil al-Sâ'irîn* (pp. 329-40 of the translation) implies views of transmigrations of ("the"?) soul which are apparently

‘Arabî and many strands of Shiite thought (and indeed in many other religions as well), whose outward aspect is apparently based on the implications of a common astronomical/astrological and cosmological system, what is again most striking with Nasafî—especially compared with Ibn ‘Arabî or the Shiite writers expounding such theories, for whom they can (and perhaps must) be understood first of all on a purely symbolic, interiorized level—is the literalism and historicity of Nasafî's account, with its apparent underlying assumption that the spiritual Truth (the *bâtin*) could somehow be "taught," if it were not for the temporary obstacles posed by humankind’s current condition and the (apparently "untrue") teachings of the theologians, philosophers, etc.

The same assumption of "literal esotericism," with similarly problematic ethical and religious implications, is apparent in Nasafî's account (translation, pp.329-40) of the development of the ("individual"?) soul as involving a gradual purgation and perfection, over thousands of years, through conditions as mineral, plant, animals, and human-animal (with its manifold possibilities) until finally reaching the truly human state, where humankind’s spiritual development, more strictly speaking, can actually begin.[44] From this perspective—which seems to convey at least the most explicit and tangible aspect of Nasafî's own eschatological belief—Paradise and Hell (and more especially, for most of mankind, the latter: see p. 239) are quite immediately with us here and now, and it is only through many lifetimes of long and painful experience (the purgative torments brought on by our passionate

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presented here as Nasafî's own. (The Persian text is actually more clear than the French in implying—although not with absolute certainty—that Nasafî is talking about conditions he really believes to be the case. These views are certainly coincident with the eschatological opinions he expresses in other chapters of these two collections.)

[44] Here one might expect Nasafî to continue by speaking of the soul's further purification and advancement, at least in symbolic terms, "through" the heavenly spheres or the higher spiritual States they represent, as in so many other forms of Islamic thought. But another rather original aspect of Nasafî's work is his treatment of the spheres and the planets (in his discussion of the "cosmic tree" as seen from the highest stage of the *ahl-i vahdat*, pp.345-48) as themselves part of the "lower world" (*dunyâ*). Instead, he quite vigorously insists (in the same chapter, at least) that the highest state of perfect vision is that attained *in the here and now*. (Denial of the spiritual, supernal state of the heavenly spheres and their Intellects, as implied in the accepted Ptolemaic cosmology of that time, is usually to be found only among the most literal-minded theologians.) This attitude may also flow from a very literal conception of "reincarnation" on Nasafî's part; one wonders, in the same connection, whether his words about the possible "re-descent" of sinners into animal bodies are to be taken literally or—as for so many other Persian Sufis—as reference to the vast majority of "human animals" (*bashar*, not *insan)* exhibiting a corresponding variety of "animal" and spiritually imperfect natures.

psychic attachments to one or another dimension of "this world") that some individuals can move on to the higher, paradisiacal stages of spiritual awareness and the true "end" of their "cycle" of perfection.[45] Again, while one would not want to deny that, with appropriate qualifications, this is at least one possible aspect of Ibn ‘Arabî's (and many other Islamic thinkers') understanding of the eschatological language of the Qur’an, what is extraordinary here (for an Islamic mystic, at least) is Nasafî's unqualified and quite open statement of this point of view—opening the way to all those potential ethical perversions of this vast transmigrationist perspective (in terms of either quietism or antinomianism, *ibâha*) which, in the Islamic world, seem to have restrained its non-symbolic formulation by any but certain "extreme" (and in their own way equally literalist!) Shiite *‘ghulât’* groups.[46] Moreover, quite apart from these potentially dangerous popular misunderstandings, even the experienced Sufi reader could easily reduce the bearing of Nasafî's formulations—which give only minimal reference to the complex eschatological symbolism of the Qur’an and *hadîth*, portrayed in such detail in Ibn ‘Arabî's own writings—to the single plane of his or her own limited immediate experience, with the obvious dangers either of a short-circuiting of their spiritual realization or of a sort of vain "spiritual elitism" (familiar dangers Nasafî himself denounces in other contexts).

We have already dealt with the characteristic way Ibn ‘Arabî (and his followers),

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[45] The final chapter of *al-Insan al-Kâmil* (pp.237-51 of this translation), devoted to the exposition of "the Paradise and Gehenna *that are in us*" fits integrally with the account of *naskh* and *maskh* (loosely translatable as "transmigration," though whether of "individual" souls or one cosmic soul is also unclear from this description) in the description of the fifth stage of the soul's development in the *Manâzil al-Sâ’irîn* (the chapter discussed at n. 43 above). Nasafî adds that the "story" of "the paradise and hell that will be" is "already known" and that he will speak in another treatise of the one "that is outside us"—not necessarily the same as the story that is "already known"?—but he does not do this here or in the other works we have seen, so far as we can tell.

[46] It is essential here—as indeed in most traditions of Islamic thought, whether mystical, philosophic, or Shiite—to distinguish carefully between what is *expressed* and what may well be believed or known: it is usually the public expression, and not the belief, that caused certain groups to be classed as "extremist." (See Ibn ‘Arabî's own indications in this regard. nn. 29-31.) Ibn Abî Jumhûr’s open statement, at a slightly later period, that "most of the philosophers and the Illuminationists" believed in the transmigration of souls (cited by W. Madelung, op. cit. in n. 39 above; Madelung does not give the Arabic term or add what additional explanations may have been provided in the original text), is a revealing indication of what can be gathered from the symbols and allusions of such other important figures as Suhrawardi, the *Rasa'il* of the Ikhwân al-Safâ’, and many other Sufis and philosophers before and after that time.

through their emphasis on the key notion of *tajalliyât*, carefully avoided the confusions and practical dangers flowing from the simplified conceptions of "Unity" (*wahda*) exemplified in the works of Balyânî or Ibn Sab'în, and many of the same remarks would be applicable to Nasafî's own discussions of the "people of Unity" (*ahl-i vahdat*, perhaps equivalent to the *muwahhidûn*, in the usual Sufi usage of that term), whom he usually considers the highest, most realized group.[47] (He also speaks of their unitive insight as though it *were* the reality of the "resurrection" and Paradise, whereas that realization is always quite explicitly only one important dimension of those symbols in Ibn 'Arabî.) An interesting practical corollary of this metaphysical conception throughout both works translated here is Nasafî's comparison of the *ahl-i vahdat* with the (for him) clearly inferior conceptions of the *mutakallimûn* and the philosophers (*hukamâ'*). For him (see p. 265) these are the first two stages of humankind's truly responsible spiritual advancement—the vast mass of humanity, as already indicated, being still animals in outwardly human form—and once their illusions and limitations are described, they merit no further mention. With Ibn 'Arabî, and even more so in his later interpreters discussed in the following sections,[48] the focus is always on the formulations of each group of the "theoreticians" (as with the even more fundamental role of the unique personal "lord" present in each person's faith), as in themselves a prefiguration of the Truth, a valid and indispensable mirroring, in that person's experience, of the absolute Reality (*Haqq*)—a truly universal perspective which emphasizes the brotherhood flowing from each individual's intrinsic (if rarely fully realized) relationship with God (rather than the exclusiveness of a "gnostic" elite), and which suggests a far more comprehensive awareness of the manifold functions of the prophets (and their true "heirs"), in this world as well as the hereafter.

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[47] Nasafî's terminology or categorization seems to vary in this regard (this being one of the points where reference to his other works and other Kubrâwî writings might have been especially helpful): at the end of the *Manâzil al-Sâ'irîn* (pp.349-52), he calls the "gnostics" *('ârifân)* an even higher group within the *ahl-i vahdat*. In any case, it is interesting that here (e.g., p. 240) the term "Sufi" already refers to a relatively lower, more popular category or stage, reminding us of the similar relative denigration of the *'âbid* and *zâhid* (common terms applied to the earlier historical Sufis), in favor of the term *'ârif* ("gnostic" or "true knower") already found in the works of Ibn Sina, Ghazâlî, etc.

[48] See the similar comparisons of the Sufi, *kalâm*, and *falsafa* positions on basic theological questions, with the same systematic approach (but quite different conclusions from Nasafî's) in works by such figures as H. Âmulî, Ibn Turka Isfâhânî, Ibn Abî Jumhûr, Jâmî, and Mullâ Sadrâ discussed in the text and notes immediately below (section IV).

IV. ‘Abd al-Razzâq al-Kâshânî (d. ca. 735/1335) was one of the foremost and certainly one of the most influential representatives of what may more rightfully be called a "school" of Ibn ‘Arabî, a line of interpretation and further development of the Shaykh's thought whose essential features are already clearly evident in its founder, Ibn ‘Arabî's stepson and close disciple Sadr al-Dîn al-Qûnawî (or "al-Qunyawî," after the city of Konya where he died in 673/1274): Given the decisive and still largely unrecognized importance of this school for the later development of Islamic thought in general, along with the remarkable lack of translations and general studies of its key figures,[49] the few recent French publications on Kâshânî will be supplemented in this section by brief references to works in several languages on or by other major figures in this movement (Qûnawî, Jîlî, Âmulî, and Jâmî) and by an introduction to a few of its distinctive characteristics shared by all these authors. To begin with, this tradition of highly sophisticated philosophic and theological speculation must be distinguished from several other important but more diffuse lines of influence of Ibn 'Arabî’s work in the later Islamic world which are, if anything, even less studied: (a) the influence of the Shaykh and his *Arab* Sufi disciples (e.g., Ibn Sawdakîn, ‘Afîf al-Dîn al-Tilimsânî, etc.) in the Maghreb and other Arabic-speaking regions;[50] (b) the multiple dimensions of Ibn ‘Arabî's

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[49] The most substantial studies on the early, formative figures in this school are those cited in the rest of this Section below, which can be supplemented by the general historical outlines in the two survey' by H. Corbin mentioned in n. 3 above. In addition to the writings discussed in those studies, see the much longer list of sources and authors (especially the dozens of commentators of the *Fusûs al-Hikam* and Ibn ‘Arabî's brief Summary, *Naqsh al-Fusûs)* given by Osman Yahia in his *Histoire et* ***Cl****assification . . .* (Repertoire Général, items 150 and 523) and in the Arabic introduction to his edition (with H. Corbin) of Haydar Âmulî’s *Nass al-Nusûs* (full references at n. 5 above). Also extremely important in this regard, because giving us some insight into the many possible "non-literary" chains of transmission, are the long lists of direct auditors (from the early manuscripts) given in Dr. Yahia's new, ongoing critical edition of the *Futûhât,* as well as his summaries of several *silsila*s of direct transmitters of Ibn ‘Arabî's works *(Histoire...,* Addenda A, II, pp.539-51) and the transmission of Ibn ‘Arabî's *khirqa akbariyya* (Addenda, B, II, p.543). (For further references to this last *silsila,* which was transmitted within several of the well-known Sufi orders, see the discussions by Michel Chodkiewicz, ref. at n. 113 below.)

[50] For a few aspects of this subject, see the discussion of ‘Abd al-Qâdir al-Jazâ’irî at the end of this article and the references to the 18th-century Moroccan Sufi Ibn ‘Ajîba (works by Jean-Louis Michon cited at n. 4 above), as well as the important treatise by Ibn ‘Arabî's close disciple Badr al-Habashî, also mentioned in n. 4. It is certainly the case that the "Ibn ‘Arabî" criticized by Ibn Khaldun in the *Muqaddima,* where the focus is entirely on the occult, magic, and the supernatural (which may have played a much greater role in some kinds of "popular" Sufism: see the kinds of apocryphal works commonly attributed to Ibn

influence on "practicing" Sufis within many different orders, as illustrated in part by the work of Nasafî and the later Qâdiri text discussed above; and (c) the even more complex question of "borrowings" of vocabulary and concepts (especially connected with the notion of *wahdat al-wujûd*) by later poets, theologians, etc., exhibiting varying degrees of acquaintance with Ibn ‘Arabî's own works or even with the commentators on the *Fusus*.[51]

With regard to its formal and historical characteristics, the school of Islamic thought[52] that developed out of Qûnawî's interpretation of Ibn ‘Arabî was marked by at least four distinctive features. First, its focus on the actual writings of Ibn ‘Arabî, insofar as they were studied at all,[53] was primarily on the *Fusûs al-Hikam*, and even there was mainly dedicated to

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‘Arabî, n. 19 above), is unbelievably distant from the figure presented in the tradition of Qûnawî and his successors discussed here.

[51] This relatively superficial approach is certainly characteristic of much of the polemical literature, whether pro or eon, revolving around the *Fusûs al-Hikam* (references above, n. 5), as well as with much of the poetic and literary use of Ibn ‘Arabî's technical terminology (n. 2 above). As with the uses of Platonic (or Neo-Platonic) themes in Western literature, it is probably fairly rare for poets and men of letters to have studied the works of Ibn ‘Arabî and his interpreters in great detail; yet the ability to perceive and convey his central insights (as with Plato) is not dependent on (nor even always combined with) a more "scholastic," Systematic study of those works themselves.

[52] The term "school" here must be used cautiously and subject to two extremely important qualifications. First, the real philosophic and theological unity and diversity of these writers have not begun to be explored in modern research; the same is true, incidentally, for the later schools of Islamic philosophy as well. (Most Western authors, as can he seen from many of the translations available in this field, have sought instead to bring out the general "Islamic" or "Akbari" aspect of these works—which is understandably more important to a general audience—rather than to focus on those questions that generated the hundreds (if not thousands) of books produced in this school.) Secondly, none of these writers are mere "commentators" of Ibn ‘Arabî, as can readily be seen even in the works (Kashani, Jîlî, Âmulî, Jâmî, etc.) discussed below. As with "Aristotelianism" or "Platonism" in Western thought, Ibn ‘Arabî's writings were only the starting point for the most diverse developments, in which reference to subsequent interpreters quickly became at least as important as the study of the Shaykh himself.

[53] See more generally nn. 51-52 above. In particular, the special role of the *Fusûs al-Hikam* as the primary *teaching* tool (although the masters themselves no doubt read more widely) in the eastern Islamic world is amply illustrated by the vast number of commentaries produced down to the 19th century (n. 49).

The fate of Ibn 'Arab' in this regard, at least within this more scholarly tradition, is closely analogous to that of Ibn Sina in later Islamic philosophy and *kalam*: already by the time of Ghazâlî (and indeed of Avicenna's immediate disciples such as Bahmanyâr, whose *K. al-Tahsîl* [ed. M. Mutahharî, Tehran, 1349] quickly became a favorite teaching text), Ibn Sina's ideas—often in unrecognizable and no longer philosophic form—were largely being transmitted through subsequent manuals and summaries, whether in logic or metaphysics,

bringing out the metaphysical and theological aspects of that work (the "Unity of Being," the ontology of the divine "Presences," and their reflection in the "Perfect Human Being"). Secondly, the popularity and tremendous influence of this more strictly conceptual, metaphysical approach seem to have been greatest on the eastern Islamic world (including the Ottoman realms, Central Asia, Muslim India, and other lands where Persian was for many centuries the *lingua franca* of higher culture), where Arabic was for the most part the language only of a learned scholarly elite; hence its leading figures, beginning with Qûnawî, were often *'ulamâ'* as well as Sufis, and were used to writing in both Arabic and Persian (and sometimes Turkish), depending on their intended audience.[54] Thirdly, this school developed, from the very beginning, in extremely close interaction with the separate intellectual traditions of Avicennan *falsafa* (especially as transmitted by N. Tûsî) and of later *kalâm* (Fakhr al-Dîn al-Râzî, al-Îjî, etc.) which were both already deeply established in those regions;[55] this restricted intellectual context in particular involved a serious limitation—or at least a significant transformation—of its audience, intentions, and choice of subjects when compared with the actual writings of Ibn 'Arabî. Finally, while all three of these traditions of Islamic thought maintained their separate identities—and especially their fundamentally different conceptions of spiritual or philosophic method, which often were at least as

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often reducing his thought to rote *"kalâm"* (in both senses of that term).

[54] For the importance of Persian poetry, in particular, in the further spread of Ibn 'Arabî's "ideas"—with the transmutation that necessarily involved—see the discussion of Jâmî and (Iraqi later in this article.

[55] See especially the discussion of Qûnawî's correspondence with the Avicennan philosopher (and Shiite theologian) Nasîr al-Din al-Tusi discussed at n. 65 below (article by W. Chittick). An especially useful indication of the historical situation of these intellectual traditions in Anatolia immediately prior to the spread of Ibn 'Arabî's thought by Qûnawî and his followers (if we can trust the date 629/1231 in the colophon) is the text *al-Bulgha fî al-Hikma* published in facsimile by the Turkish scholar (and author of an important work on Qûnawî), Dr. Nihat Keklik (Istanbul, 1969). While the work is most certainly *not* by Ibn 'Arabî, as the editor then maintained—a point worth stressing, given the way such attributions tend to spread if not noted by booksellers and libraries—it is a remarkable indication of the situation of "speculative mysticism" in its more intellectual, metaphysical form at this period; it therefore reflects many of Ibn 'Arabî's (and Qûnawî's or Ibn Sab'în's) immediate precursors in this area of Islamic thought. The unknown author draws especially on the works of Suhrawardi "Maqtûl"(n. 14 above) and Ghazâlî (n. 13), within a broader metaphysical framework taken (as with both Suhrawardi and Ghazâlî) from a certain Avicennan tradition. His positive and enthusiastic use of Suhrawardi is especially interesting, since most of Suhrawardi's later commentators (seen. 14) known to us—up until Mulla Sadra—tended to be fairly non-mystical Avicennan thinkers treating Suhrawardi not as a Sufi writer, but as another scholastic commentator of Ibn Sina.

significant as their nominal "conclusions"—they shared a formally similar *kalâm* language and problematic, so that representatives of each “school" were usually at least superficially acquainted with the literature and terminology of the opposing groups.[56]

What resulted from these developments, already in the writings of Qûnawî, was a body of complex theoretical literature focusing on the intellectual understanding and elaboration of certain perennial philosophic and theological problems within its own independent conceptual framework and technical terminology, drawn largely from the writings of Ibn ‘Arabî.[57] Whatever one's opinion of this transformation—and, among the many motivations for Qûnawî's efforts, there is little doubt that it helped to make Ibn ‘Arabî more interesting and acceptable to the educated elite of the time, from both *kalâm* and philosophic backgrounds—the outcome was clearly something very different from Ibn ‘Arabî's own writings (and especially the *Futûhât*), as one can readily verify even in

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[56] This continuing separation of these distinct intellectual traditions becomes quite apparent, after Qûnawî (cf. n. 65), in the many works by later writers in the more mystical school of Ibn ‘Arabî comparing his positions with those of the Avicennan philosophers and *mutakallimun*: see the works by H. Âmulî, Ibn Turka Isfâhânî, Ibn Abî Jumhûr, Jâmî, and Mulla Sadra discussed below.

Apart from studies of those writers, we still have almost no literature bringing out the vitality, independence. and originality of these other later traditions of Islamic thought, usually because outside scholars have been unaware of the "code-words" and distinctive commitments and assumptions underlying the common—and often highly misleading—kalam framework. (One would have much the same impression in approaching the classics of medieval Latin philosophy with no prior background.) Some idea of those features—within a quite limited time and geographical area—can be gathered from the texts included in Corbin and Ashtiyani's *Anthologie des philosophes iraniens*…. (cf. n. 3 above and our review in *Sophia Perennis* III, no. I [Tehran, 1977], pp. l28ff.).

[57] This description is already true even of the earliest "commentaries" on the *Fusûs* (cf. n. 52 for the possibly misleading nature of this term) by Qûnawî, where independent theoretical developments already often take precedence over the illumination of Ibn ‘Arabî's actual writing. (See illustrative translations by W. Chittick mentioned below.) While the commentary of Dawûd al-Qaysarî is probably the most helpful in actually understanding the *Fusûs)* itself, his "Introduction" *(muqaddima)* is virtually an independent philosophic study, and was itself the object of dozens of subsequent commentaries. The latest of these supercommentaries (itself a revealing illustration of this genre, which almost overwhelms Qaysarî's relatively brief Introduction) is S. Jalâl al-Din Ashtiyani's *Sharh-i Muqaddima-yi Qaysarî*…Mashhad, 1385/1966 (651 pp. with French and English introductions by H. Corbin and S. H. Nasr). (Significantly enough, in view of the continuing clerical suspicions of Ibn ‘Arabî [see n. 5 above], Ashtiyani's own extended Persian commentary on the *Fusûs,* promised in this volume, has not yet been published.)

translation.[58] Within this new intellectual perspective, one may also note the relative neglect (at least in the literature itself) of two key features of most of Ibn ‘Arabî's own writings: his detailed concern with method and practice, the "phenomenology" of the spiritual Path (a dimension he shared with other Sufi masters and most earlier Sufi authors); and his attempts to communicate his spiritual realizations and insights directly to his readers, through a wide variety of rhetorical devices (often closely tied to the Arabic language) which are never entirely separate from—nor reducible to—their implicit intellectual and metaphysical framework.[59] The relative suppression of these features, while allowing greater conceptual clarity and systematic coherence, did have its costs. For both of these reasons, non-specialists will almost inevitably find Ibn ‘Arabî's own writings both more powerful and more directly accessible than those of his interpreters in this "school," since the works of Qûnawî and his successors are often virtually incomprehensible today without a lengthy preliminary explanation of their own intellectual framework and terminology, as well as the related *kalâm* and *falsafa* systems frequently involved in the discussions.[60]

Qûnawî's more systematic and theoretical writings, however, reflect only one dimension of his role in the transmission and systematization of Ibn ‘Arabî's ideas and

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[58] A handy illustration of this point, while awaiting the longer translations promised by William Chittick and S. Ruspoli (nn. 67-68), it the translation of Qûnawî's brief *Mir’at al-'Ârifîn* discussed below, at n. 69.

[59] This not at all to imply that the foremost representatives of this school were not themselves Sufis, nor that they did not also, in some eases (cf. Jîlî below) write other works illustrating either of these points. In fact, most of them were often deeply involved in various *tariqas*—this concern with the "practice" of Sufism being of course the element that especially distinguished them, for example, from the Avicennan philosophers whom they were debating. But it is nonetheless true that these two aspects of theory and spiritual realization are not nearly so intimately and explicitly (indeed often inseparably) linked as they are in the Shaykh's own writings. (See our remarks on the importance of the "rhetorical" dimension of Ibn ‘Arabî's writing, in the broadest sense of that term. in Part I of this article, at n. 11.)

[60] For these reasons (See n. 56 above), the relative originality and creativity of Islamic thought in this period—which are undeniable, e.g., in a writer like Jîlî (see below)—are still largely unexplored, and must remain relatively "invisible" until their terminology and categories are more adequately explored (The impressions of "stagnation," "decadence," "fossilization," and the like that one often finds in secondary accounts are seldom based on serious, lengthy study of the tradition's in question—being roughly equivalent to the likely reaction if one were to hand works of Kant and Hegel. in the original and with no commentary or explanation, to someone from an entirely different civilization. At the very least, that person would find it very difficult to sort out what is original and important from what is not, without much deeper acquaintance with the tradition in question.)

teachings. Equally important was the extraordinary range of his personal relationships which—whether as master, disciple, or colleague—spanned almost every Islamic intellectual tendency and school, both Sufi and non-Sufi, of his age. (That phenomenon is no doubt partly explicable by Konya's unusual situation at that time as a sanctuary for influential refugees fleeing the Mongol invasions of Central Asia and Iran.) Among his wide-ranging contacts were the renowned Persian mystical poets Rûmî (d. 672/1273), Awhad al-Dîn Kirmânî (d. 635/ 1238, a shaykh of the Suhrawardîya order and, along with Ibn ‘Arabî, Qûnawî's own master), and—most directly influenced by Qûnawî's teaching—Fakhr al-Dîn ‘Irâqî (d. 688/ 1289);[61] the Kubrawiya shaykhs Sa‘d al-Dîn Hamû’î (d. 650/1252-53; the master of Nasafî discussed above) and Najm al-Dîn Râzî (d. 654/ 1256),[62] author of some of the most widely read Persian prose manuals of Sufi teachings; Sa'îd al-Dîn Farghânî (d. ca. 700/1300), the influential commentator (in both Persian and Arabic) of Ibn al-Fârid's celebrated Arabic Sufi poem, the *Tâ’iyya*;[63] and finally the leading Avicennan philosopher (and Shiite theologian) of that time, Nasîr al-Dîn Tûsî, and his prolific disciple Qutb al-Dîn Shîrâzî (d. 710/1311), who also spent several years studying with Qûnawî.[64] The record of

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[61] For a vivid and detailed description of ‘Irâqî's relations with Qûnawî—and of Qûnawî's larger circle, including his own relationship as a disciple of Kirmânî—see the biographical section, pp. 33-66, in the translation and study of ‘Irâqî's *Lama'ât* by William Chittick and Peter L. Wilson, *Divine Flashes* (New York, Paulist Press, 1982); this work is discussed further in the section on the poet Jâmî below. These biographical passages, including a letter of ‘Irâqî to Qûnawî, are invaluable simply for their portrayal of an aspect of Qûnawî that could otherwise scarcely be imagined simply on the basis of his more theoretical writings.

[62] For Najm al-Din Kubra, Hamû’î, and other major figures in the early Kubrawiya, see the references at n. 33 and throughout the section on Nasafî above. Prof. H. Landolt has detected some influence of Ibn ‘Arabî's thought (as with Nasafî, on a particular subject, not as a total system) in the *Mirsâd al-'Ibâd*, a widely read Persian prose work on Sufism by Najm al-Dîn Râzî: see the article on Simnânî and Kâshânî in *Der Islam* (full references at n. 80 in the concluding part of this article), p.30, n. 4. Râzî's work has recently become available in a complete English translation (with limited Introduction and annotation) by H. Algar, *The Path of God's Bondsmen* (New York, Caravan Press, 1980).

[63] His commentary has also been edited: *Mashâriq al-Darârî: Sharh-i Tâ’iyya-i Ibn-i Fâriz*, ed. Jalâl al-Din Ashtiyânî (Mashhad, 1979), 883 pp.; ‘Abd al-Razzâq al-Kâshânî (whose Qur’anic commentary is discussed later in this Section) has also been attributed a famous commentary on this *Nazm al-Sulûk* (but see n. 73 below). See also the English translation and running commentary of the same work by A. J. Arberry, *The Poem of the Way* (London, 1952; Chester Beatty Monographs No.5).

[64] The works of both men have been studied (in the West) most recently in terms of their astronomical activity at the famous observatory Tusi established at Maragheh; see the

Qûnawî's extended correspondence with Tusi, carefully summarized in an important article by William Chittick,[65] is a remarkably revealing illustration of the way this systematic "school" of Ibn ‘Arabî developed in many respects out of the attempt to rephrase the Shaykh's insights and conclusions—taken to be representative of the methods and principles of Sufism more generally—in terms convincing and intelligible to the prevailing learned Eastern-Islamic philosophic and theological schools of the time.[66]

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articles on this aspect in the *Dictionary of Scientific Biography*. Unfortunately, Tûsî's decisive and multi-faceted influence on subsequent Islamic thought—where he was of the utmost importance in reviving the truly philosophic study of Ibn Sina (through his commentary on the *Ishârât* and his several works severely attacking the influential *mutakallim* Fakhr al-Dîn Râzî) and inaugurating an important line of Twelver Shiite theology (through his *Tajrîd al-'Aqâ'id,* the object of dozens of later commentaries)—has not yet attracted study in proportion to its importance. (See also n. 39 above, for W. Madelung's article stressing Tûsî's major political role as well.) W. Strothmann's monograph *Die Zwölfer Schî'a: Zwei religionsgeschichtliche Characterbilder aus der Mongolenzeit,* recently reprinted (Hildesheim/New York, 1975), is a helpful biographical outline—bringing out the (again still largely unstudied) importance of Tûsî's many years of activity as an Ismaili theologian—but does not really go into a deeper study of his role in Islamic *intellectual* history, and especially the way his Avicennan philosophic commitment was expressed in his theological and political activities.

The apparent lack of any serious "Sufi" orientation in Qutb al-Din's commentary on Suhrawardi (see n. 14 for its forthcoming publication in French translation) has often been commented on, but again there is not yet any comprehensive study of his many activities (closely paralleling those of Tûsî, except for the Shiite theological side).

[65] "Mysticism Versus Philosophy in Earlier Islamic History: the al-Tusi, al-Qûnawî Correspondence," *Religious Studies* 17 (1981), pp.87-104, where the author also mentions (p.98, n. 1) that he has prepared a critical edition of this text. Those acquainted with the difficulty of the original Arabic—consisting of a letter from Qûnawî attempting to phrase key insights and assumptions of Ibn ‘Arabî in terms comprehensible to "Peripatetic" thought; Tûsî's rather condescending response, echoing Ibn Sina's attitude toward Sufism in the *Ishârât;* and Qûnawî's reply and answers to Tûsî's objections—will appreciate the mastery of Prof. Chittick's summary of the underlying issues.

In particular, this correspondence and the Avicennan intellectual context it assumes (see also n. 55 above) suggests some of the reasons for the subsequent centrality of problems of *wahdat al-wujûd* (and the corresponding formulation of Ibn ‘Arabî's thought in primarily ontological, rather than theological, terms, drawing largely on Ibn Sina's vocabulary) in the writings of this school, since that concentration is by no means reflective of the importance of this problem or this vocabulary in Ibn ‘Arabî's own writings. (Typically—and following other Sufi writers of his time in general—he makes more frequent use of the kalam Qur'anic language of the divine Attributes and Names, with the distinctively Sufi focus on their existential correlates.) This contrast can readily be seen in comparing the *Fusûs* itself with these commentaries. (See further remarks on Kâshânî's vocabulary below.)

[66] This should not be taken to imply that the form of this tradition can simply be understood as a sort of apologetic (or polemic) reaction to competing intellectual traditions of

Our knowledge and understanding of Qûnawî's work and his creative historical role in the transmission of Ibn ‘Arabî should be greatly increased by two major works whose publication has been promised by Dr. S. Ruspoli (a French translation and commentary of the *Miftâh Ghayb al-Jam' wa-l-Wujûd*)[67] and Professor William Chittick (a comprehensive study including a number of translations).[68] While awaiting those longer studies, one can gain a first impression of the major themes and distinctive style of Qûnawî and his school—and of the original developments separating his approach from Ibn ‘Arabî's—from an English version of his short treatise (only 14 pages in translation), *Mir’at al-'Ârifîn* [*Reflection of the Awakened*. "Attributed to al-Qûnawî." Tr. Sayyid Hasan Askari. Pp.59 + 48 pp. of Arabic text. London: Zahra Trust. 1981.].[69] The central themes alluded to here (so concisely as to

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the time; but it does mean that even "internal" developments and explication of problems already posed within Ibn ‘Arabî's writings tended to be formulated in the language and concepts taken over from existing *falsafa* and *kalam* traditions. This process is especially evident with commentators like Kâshânî who came to Ibn 'Arabî not from a purely Sufi background. but with extensive training in the philosophy (or theology) of Ibn Sina and his followers. (The same path, of course, was also followed by Suhrawardî [nn. 14 and 55 above, whose distinctively mystical thought and insights were likewise expressed in terms still so heavily Avicennan that subsequent commentators often took little note of the truly decisive differences between the two perspectives.)

It is also important to recognize that within this intellectual and historical context "Ibn ‘Arabî" (i.e., the writings of this tradition of Qûnawî and his followers) often came to be seen as a Sort of normative theological "representative "—as in the many controversies discussed in n. 5 above—for a multitude of existing Sufi orders and practices, including many beliefs and tendencies that could scarcely be justified or defended on the basis of his own Sufi writings. (See also references to attacks by Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Khaldun throughout the preceding sections.)

[67] This is a revised and abridged version of his doctoral thesis (Univ. de Paris IV, 1978), which also included a critical edition of this major work of Qûnawî.

[68] This work, "tentatively titled *Ascendant Stars of Faith,"* is mentioned in several of Prof. Chittick's recent studies of aspects of Qûnawî's thought, and will apparently include translations of several important treatises. In the meanwhile, in addition to hit articles cited above (n. 65) and below (n. 71), see also "Sadr al-Din Qûnawî on the Oneness of Being," *International Philosophical Quarterly* XXI (1981), pp.171-84, and "The Last Will and Testament of Ibn ‘Arabî's Foremost Disciple and Some Notes on its Author," *Sophia Perennis* 4 (1978), pp. 43-58.

[69] The phrase "attributed to al-Qûnawî" refers to the interesting and historically significant fact, discussed at length in Prof. Askari's introduction, ". . . that from the twelfth century onwards both in Persian and Urdu [Twelver Shiite] circles, *Mirat 'l-Arifin* [sic] was seriously considered as a work of Imam Husayn" (p.3). While the book itself is undoubtedly either by Qûnawî or some later figure in his school, this attribution is itself a fascinating phenomenon on at least two counts: (1) as it illustrates the remarkable penetration of Ibn ‘Arabî's ideas and vocabulary in all areas of the eastern Islamic world (See n. 2 above); and

be incomprehensible without lengthy commentary)—such problems as Qur'anic cosmology and the degrees of existence, their reintegration in the realization of the "Perfect Human Being" (*al-insân al-kâmil*), and the ontological correspondences and distinctions at each level of that "circle of being"—are all illustrated and analyzed in profuse detail in the longer works of Qûnawî and his followers, especially the influential line of commentators of the *Fusûs al-Hikam* that continued through Mu'ayyid al-Dîn Jandî (d. ca. 700/1300), 'Abd al-Razzâq Kâshânî (d. 736/1335), and Dawûd Qaysarî (d. 751/ 1351).[70] Together, these four figures—whose works demonstrate an originality and independence that makes them considerably more than mere "commentators" in any limited sense—seem to have determined the major themes and conceptions that guided the more theoretical teaching and understanding of Ibn 'Arabî (and, at least in much of the Eastern Islamic world, of Sufism more generally), through dozens of subsequent commentaries and more independent works, down to the present day. An excellent introduction to some of their central common themes, and at the same time to their individual particularities, is now available in two pioneering comparative studies by Professor Chittick, incorporating extensive translations from each of these authors: "The Five Divine Presences: From al-Qûnawî to al-Qaysarî" and "The Chapter Headings of the *Fusûs*."[71]

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(2) as it raises still virtually unexplored questions of the background—or at least the undeniable parallelism—between many of Ibn 'Arabî's themes and methods and those of earlier Shiite works, questions which are often applicable to the intellectual and philosophic expressions of Sufism more generally (see n. 13 above).

The translator's notes and explanations of this text are also a salutary illustration of the difficulties facing anyone who wishes to explain the technical philosophic language and problematic of Qûnawî and his successors to contemporary readers (see nn. 56 and 60 above)—a problem which in itself points to the substantial differences between their writings and those of the Shaykh himself.

[70] See n. 57 above for the most recent continuation of this tradition (based on Qaysarî's "Commentary") by a modern Iranian student of these authors, and see n. 49 for the multitude of intermediate links in this chain of writers on the *Fusûs*. Also worth noting is the fact that each of these four figures personally studied the text with his predecessor, beginning with Ibn 'Arabî; references in O. Yahia, *Histoire*... Addenda A (II, pp.539-41).

[71] The first of these articles, which, as the author notes, is likewise about one essential aspect of Ibn 'Arabî's notion of the *Insan Kâmil,* appeared in *The Muslim World* LXXII (1982), pp 107-28. This study is based on the works of Qûnawî and his students more generally, and thus brings out the importance of the thought of his other disciple al-Farghânî, whose commentary on the *Nazm al-Sulûk* was already mentioned (n. 63 above). The second study, in the *Journal of the Muhyiddîn Ibn 'Arabî Society* 11(1984), pp. 41-94, which includes remarks from each of these thinkers, is especially useful in suggesting their

historical relations of dependency and originality.